C. S. Lewis's Science-fiction Trilogy: The Battle between Good and Evil

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Contents

I Introduction

Out of the Silent Planet (1938), *Perelandra* (1944), and *That Hideous Strength* (1946) are a series of science fiction which is usually referred to as Lewis's S. F. trilogy or the Ransom trilogy after the name of its protagonist Elwin Ransom.

The central theme of this trilogy is mythopoeic struggle between metaphysical good and evil. The stories show such a strong theological and ethical concern that they are probably to be classified as theological science fiction, or rather, even theology in the framework of science fiction.

Out of the Silent Planet and *Perelandra* are imaginative attempts at depicting paradisaical worlds that have never fallen. They show what it would be like if evil were brought into completely innocent worlds. *That Hideous Strength*, on the other hand, is an eschatological story, taking place on the earth where evil has already taken root deeply.

As the trilogy goes on from *Out of the Silent Planet* to *That Hideous Strength*, the intrinsic nature of good and evil becomes more and more clear. At the same time the salvation theme, or the theme of each individual's attaining Reality also becomes more and more manifest.

notes

Texts by Lewis and their Abbreviations are as follows:

Abolition *The Abolition of Man: Reflections on Education with Special Reference to the Teaching of English in the Upper Forms of Schools.* Macmillan, 1947; paperbacks, 1955.

Allegory: The Allegory of Love: A Study in Medieval Tradition. Oxford Univ. Press, 1936; paperbacks, 1958; rpt. 1977

Christian Reflections: Christian Reflections. Ed. Walter Hooper. Eerdmans, 1967; rpt. 1982.

Discarded: The Discarded Image: An Introduction to Medieval and Renaissance Literature. Cambridge Univ. Press, 1964; paparbacks, 1967.

Divorce: The Great Divorce. Macmillan, paperbacks, 1946.

God: God in the Dock: Essays on Theology and Ethics. Ed. Walter Hooper. Eerdmans, 1970.

Hideous: That Hideous Strength: A Modern Fairy-Tale for Grown-Ups. 1946; Macmillan, paperbacks, 1965.

Joy: Surprised by Joy: The Shape of My Early Life. 1955; Collins, 1959; paperbacks, 1977.

Malcolm: Letters to Malcolm: Chiefly on Prayer. Harcourt, 1963.

Mere Christianity: Mere Christianity. 1952; Collins, 1955; paperbacks, 1977.

Miracles: Miracles: A Preliminary Study. 1947; Collins, paperbacks, 1960.

On Stories: On Stories and Other Essays on Literature. Ed. Walter Hooper. Harcourt, 1982.
Pain: The Problem of Pain. 1940; Collins, 1957; paperbacks, 1977.
Perelandra: Perelandra: A Novel. 1944; Macmillan, paperbacks, 1965.
Preface: A Preface to 'Paradise Lost'. Oxford Univ. Press, 1942; paperbacks, 1960; rpt. 1979.
Regress: The Pilgrim's Regress: An Allegorical Apology for Christianity, Reason, and Romanticism. 1933; rpt. with a new preface, notes and running headlines, 1943; Eerdmans, 1958; rpt. 1982.
Screwtape: The Screwtape Letters. 1942; Collins, 1955; paperbacks, 1977.
Selected Essays: Selected Lietery Essays. Ed. Walter Hooper. London: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1969; paperbacks, 1979.
Silent Planet: Out of the Silent Planet. 1938; Macmillan, paperbacks, 1965.
Studies: Studies in Medieval and Renaissance Literature. Cambridge Univ. Press, 1966; paperbacks, 1979; rpt. 1980.
Till We: Till We Have Faces: A Myth Retold. 1956; Harcourt, paperbacks, 1980.

Out of the Silent Planet

The story of *Out of the Silent Planet* is as follows:

Elwin Ransom, a Cambridge Philologist, is kidnapped to Mars by his old classmate Divine and Divine's company Weston. On Mars, or "Malacandra" as it is called in this book, they are going to offer Ransom to Malacandrian inhabitants as a sacrifice. However, Ransom is not killed nor even gets any harm. On Malacandra, there are three rational species, or three kinds of "*hnau*" in their language. They are *hrossa* ("hrossa" being the plural form of "hross"), an otto-like species that is good at poetry and hunting; *séroni* (sg. *Sorn*) with a tall man-like figure that have the widest knowledge, and *pfifltriggi* (sg. *pfifltrigg*) that are the best craftsmen of the three. Ransom finds that each of the three species, having its own merit, respects the others and all live toghether peacefully. He also learns that the Malacandrian people are obeying their Creator whom they call Maleldil, that there is a sort of angelic species called *eldila* (sg. *eldil*), and that the chief eldil, called Oyarsa, is acting as the genius angel of the planet.

While living among *hrossa,* Ransom realizes how advanced they are in religion and ethics, though at first they looked little different from unintellectual animals on the earth. He notices that their morality is even superior to that of human beings. Then, when talking with a *sorn,* he realizes how learned *séroni* are, and how ignorant he himself is compared to them. Thus, he realizes that it is wrong to think, as many people on the earth do, that the Malacandrians are inferior to human races.

However, Weston and Divine never realize this, and shot three *hrossa* with a rifle, thinking they are mere beasts. After the murder, Divine and Weston are caught and judged by the Oyarsa and sent back to the earth. Ransom comes back with them on his own will.

< Evil in Out of the Silent Planet >

Lewis always stresses that the essence of evil is "pride". As a Christian he follows St. Augustine in believing that the original sin of our ancestors was the sin of wishing to be on their own and turning from God to themselves. It was a proud attempt at setting themselves in the centre of their life, instead of seeing God to be the centre. Thus, in the orthodox Christianity self-centredness is identified, or at least closely connected, with pride, which has been regarded as the most serious

sin. Lewis, too, regards them as almost identical and treats self-centredness as the most conspicuous characteristic of evil. In *Out of the Silent Planet*, the self-centredness appears especially in man's way of measuring everything according to human customs, common sense, or conveniences. Sometimes Lewis turns down such a way of thinking as is generally regarded as good or taken for granted. For instance, Weston's humanism is treated as evil. Weston aims at invading Mars in order to open a new territory for man so as to make the human species survive eternally in the universe if the earth should be some day uninhabitable. In *Out of the Silent Planet*, it is shown that though man is the sovereign of the creatures on the earth, in the universe as a whole he is not entitled to dominate other creatures on other planets. This denial of man's unlimited right in the outer space comes probably from the medieval idea of man, with which Lewis is so familiar, that man is only one species of creatures that is allocated its place between angels and animals in the hierarchical ladder of "the Great Chain of Being"[1] and not privileged with such supreme power as God's. If there are other species on other planets, they may have the same right to their planets as man does to the earth; and if man were to invade other planets, the act should be unlawful and wrong.

In 1963, thirty years after the publication of *Out of the Silent Planet*, Lewis saw more and more science fictions express reflections on the sinfulness of human kind and approved the tendency thus:

> most of the earlier stories start from the opposite assumption that we, the human race, are in the right, and everything else is ogres. I may have done a little towards altering that, but the new point of view has come very much in. We've lost our confidence so to speak, . . . This is surely an enormous gain. ("Unreal Estates," *On Stories*, p. 147)

Though it is well known among Lewis critics that Lewis says he has "never started from a message or a moral . . .The story itself should force its moral upon you," ("Unreal Estates," p. 145) in *Out of the Silent Planet*, the ethical message is quite intentional, for he says in "A Reply to Professor Haldane,"

> *Out of the Silent Planet* . . . is an attack, if not on scientists, yet on something which might be called 'scientism'—a certain outlook on the world which is casually connected with the popularisation of the sciences . . . the belief that the supreme moral end is the perpetuation of our own species, and that this is to be pursued even if, in the process of being fitted for survival, our species has to be stripped of all those things for which we value it—of pity, of happiness, and of freedom. ("A Reply to Professor Haldane," *On Stories*, pp. 71–72)

In "Religion and Rocketry" Lewis says, "Man destroys or enslaves every species he can."

> It is interesting to wonder how things would go if they met an unfallen race. At first, to be sure, they'd have a grand time jeering at, duping, and exploiting its innocence; but I doubt if our half-animal cunning would long be a match for godlike wisdom, selfless valour, and perfect unanimity. I therefore fear the practical, not the theoretical, problems which will arise if ever we meet rational creatures which are not human. Against them we shall, if we can, commit all the crimes we have already committed against creatures certainly human but differing from us in features and pigmentation. ("Religion and Rocketry," *World's*, pp. 89–90.)

Thus, he finds an archetype of self-centred fallen human behaviours in the acts of the white toward the black and the red men in the past age of colonization and expresses anxiety about man's future attempt at going out to the other planets. He even says, "I have wondered before now whether the vast astronomical distances may not be God's quarantine precautions." ("Religion and Rocketry," p. 91)

In this work, Lewis shows his opinion against such man-centred philosophies as what he calls "scientism" in the above context, not by condemning them with critical words, but by presenting other ways of thinking so as to suggest by contrast that many of human standards of values or human ways of thinking are not necessarily right or absolute. The art he employs here is similar to that which Swift does in *Gulliver's Travels*. Swift goes out of England to re-assess the English ways of life and thought and presents newer points of view by introducing other imaginary species—such as dwarfs, giants, or a horce-like race—and by looking English way of life through their innocent eyes. Likewise, Lewis goes out of the earth and introduces new innocent species to reflect on man's ways of life and thought so as to overcome what Chad Walsh calls our "planetary provinciality."[2]

First of all, Lewis reverses the common assumption that man would be more progressed than the inhabitants of Mars if Mars should ever be inhabited. Malacandrian inhabitants have better morality, wider knowledge, deeper insights, and more ingenious skill in crafts than we humans. Furthermore, unlike men who have been contaminated by the original sin, they are not fallen, and in the sense of being free from evil, literally "good" and "better" than the terrestrial people. This innocence of the Malacandrian world is implied in the planet's name: as Roger L. Green and Walter Hooper suggest, "Malacandra for Mars might derive from the Latin *malo*—'I would rather be'—'would to God that we were there', ... in this case a straightforward desire in an unfallen world."[3]

In contrast to the earth under Satan, there is no evil on Malacandra. There is even no words that denote "evil". The nearest thing to evil on Malacandra is a large sea animal called "*hnakra*" which reminds us of a Leviathan. However, even that *hnakra*, with large black jaws that swallow *hrossa*, is not seen as evil. A *hross* says,

> The *hnakra* is our enemy, but he is also our beloved. We feel in our hearts his joy as he looks down from the mountain of water in the north where he was born; we leap with him when he jumps the falls; and when winter comes, and the lake smokes higher than our heads, it is with his eyes that we see it and know that his roaming time is come. We hang images of him in our houses, and the sign of all the hrossa is a *hnakra*. (p. 75)

Lewis has felt a keen longing for Norse mythology since he was a boy. In Lewis, the north is associated with mythological world, and here also *hnakra* can be seen as a mythological figure. It has both awfulness and attractiveness like mythological gods. In reading myth we accept the two seemingly incompatible sides of holiness. *Hrossa* see and accept *hnakra* the same way. Or we may see it as an embodiment of the force of Nature which is sometimes threatening and sometimes pleasant. Chad Walsh suggests that "The *hnakra* ... seems to supply an element of menace that makes every day significant because a shade less certain,"[4] and this is probably one of the right interpretations. At any rate, Lewis holds that myths are beyond the grasp of reason, for they are a

way to grasp holy reality directly through imagination without logical analysis or criticisms. In Lewis's last novel, *Till We Have Faces*, a pagan priest says, "Holy wisdom is not clear and thin like water, but thick and dark like blood. Why should the Accursed not be both the best and the worst?" (p. 50) and in *Out of the Silent Planet*, too, we do not have to interpret *hnakra* exclusively one way. At least it is clear that *hnakra* is not such an evil creature as to be the opposite of the good.

On Malacandra, where there is no evil, creatures are naturally following Maleldil. There, all the rational species are called "*hnau*". But as the story goes on it becomes clear that it is only those voluntarily following Maleldil that can be rightly called "*hnau*". Those who disobey the Creator, such as Weston and Divine, are nothing more than "bent" *hnaus*. Here we see Lewis's opinion "that good should be original and evil a mere perversion,"[5] as he follows St. Augustine's idea of evil as perversion of good. This idea is consistently shown throughout *Out of the Silent Planet*.

Since Malacandra is a paradise without any evil, its inhabitants do not have even a word referring to "evil" or "bad". The nearest equivalence they have for "bad" is "bent". This successfully shows that the "bent" relation with Maleldil is the essence of evil, for, as Dabney Hart points out, "The literal meaning of 'bent' makes its metaphorical sense much more precise and powerful than the vague term 'evil'."[6] The Oyarsa of Malacandra calls Satan, or the Fallen Angel, "the Bent One" (p. 121) with capitalization as if it were his proper name (and because it is literally the "proper", or fit, name to him). Satan's revel against God is the archetype of bent deeds, which makes him the personification of the bentness. The Malacandrian Oyarsa tells Ransom that Satan, or the Bent One, was expelled from heaven to be confined to Thulcandra (i.e. the earth) as its Oyarsa when he reveled against God. The Oyarsa tells Ransom further that the earth, whose guardian angel is Satan, is now cut out from the rest of heaven under Satan's influence. The Oyarsa says,

> Ransom of Thulcandra. Creatures of your kind must drop out of heaven into a world; for us the worlds are places in heaven. . . . Thulcandra is the world we do not know. It alone is outside the heaven, and no message comes from it. (p. 120)

The earth is a silent planet, as the title of this book shows. M. C. Sammons suggests that the idea of the earth as "the Silent Planet" has possibly come from a medieval diagram of the universe:

> There are eight strings, eight musical modes, and eight celestial spheres. But earth makes nine—one too many—thus destroying the perfection of the scheme. *In Survival of the Pagan Gods*, a book Lewis refers to several times in *The Discarded Image*, we learn that in 1518 Gafurio, basing this theory on Cicero, corrected this little inconsistency by declaring that earth, being motionless, was therefore silent. So earth's Muse (Thalia) does not take part in the Music of the Spheres.[7]

What is more important is, however, that the earth is now "the very stronghold of the Bent One" (p. 142) and has cut itself off from heaven. It is keeping "silent" to God's territory.

Because the earth is thus alienated from heaven, it is natural that the standards of value and the measure of good and evil on the earth have become different from those in heaven. For example, Weston aims at colonization of Mars from his humanistic hope for the preservation of human species. However, it is unthinkable on Malacandra that anyone should hope for eternal continuity

of his own race. The people of Malacandra readily accept it as Maleldil's way that "a world is not made to last for ever, much less a race." (p. 100)

Weston thinks that Malacandrian people do not go out to gain a new planet because they do not have the necessary skills and knowledge. However, in reality, Malacandrian people are advanced enough in science to travel through space. They have not invaded other planets not because they could not but because their moral has been as advanced as to rightly control the advanced science. The Malacandrian Oyarsa says to Weston,

> Many thousands of thousand years before this... the cold death was coming on my harandra. Then I was in deep trouble... for the things which the lord of your world, who was not yet bound, put into their minds. He would have made them as your people are now—wise enough to see the death of their kind approaching but not wise enough to endure it....They were well able to have made sky-ships. By me Maleldil stopped them. (p. 139)

Weston laughs at them that the Malacandrian people are going to die with the planet Mars without making any effort to avoid such a fate. However, the Oyarsa of Malacandra tells him that it is first of all not wiser to try to survive so desperately.

> The weakest of my people does not fear death. It is the Bent One, the lord of your world, who wastes your lives and befouls them with flying from what you know will overtake you in the end. If you were subjects of Maleldil you would have peace. (p. 140)

For the people on the earth death is a punishment for their fall and therefore fearful. Yet, for those who believe in Maleldil, death is the way to His country. For them, it is a bliss. The fact that most people on the earth are afraid of death is an indication of how much we human beings have fallen away from the original paradisaical confidence in Maleldil.

Moreover, it is self-centred of man to think of the continuity of the human race as something of the greatest importance. This self-centredness of man in putting his own race in the central position in the universe, failing to see it as no more than one of the various races made by God, comes from pride, which is Satan's sin. Thus man's fear of death shows again that the earth is "the Silent Planet", alienated from the uncorrupted heaven.

In contrast to Mars, the earth is so much under Satan's influence that even ordinary people from there tend to disobey Maleldil. Ransom, who is not especially bad by the terrestrial standard, is not an exception. When he has to go and see the Oyarsa, he chooses to go *hnakra* hunting before that. In that choice he is not conscious of his own disinclination to obey the order of the Oyarsa, or of Maleldil. He honestly believes that he is just thinking that "There is time for that after the hunt. We must kill the *hnakra* first." (p. 80) However, it is all the same a disobedience and a sin. Besides, the murder of the *hrossa* by Weston and Divine could have been prevented if Ransom had obeyed the order, and Ransom is not only guilty for the disobedience to Maleldil and the Oyarsa but is also responsible for his friends' death. It is the death of innocent ones for the sin of Ransom. Ransom has to make atonement by suffering a long journey to see the Oyarsa and by the dangerous return trip to the earth. In Lewis's fiction, every sin has to be made up for through hardship before it is forgiven. It is also important that, in Lewis, the one who undergoes the hardship by way of

atonement always gets help from God. Ransom is helped by a *sorn*.

When we think of pride and self-centredness as the greatest sin, we find that the most egoistically self-centred one in this book is Divine. He is wholly obsessed by self-interested greed for money. He does not care for others at all and offers Ransom to Malacandrian people when he thinks some sacrifice is needed in order to take gold from Mars. Seeing Divine, who wishes nothing but to live a luxurious life back on the earth, Oyarsa says thus:

> this Thin One who sits on the ground he has broken, for he has left him nothing but greed. He is now only a talking animal and in my world he could do no more evil than an animal. If he were mine I would unmake his body for the *hnau* in it is already dead. (p. 139)

In *The Problem of Pain*, Lewis illustrates his idea of people in hell as "remains" of man, who has been "banished from humanity." (p. 113) Divine is now only "remains" of a human, not a human. He is thus the most hellish type in this book.

However, everything that is treated as unfavourable by Lewis in this book is not such an overt evil as Divine's greed. As we have seen above in the case of Weston's humanism, some ideas which we usually take for granted or even regard as virtuous are seen critically. Ethics and value standards of the fallen earth and those of Malacandra cannot be the same though not essentially different.

Desire for power, which is everywhere on the earth is not to be seen on Malacandra, because there, everyone is contented to serve Maleldil through the Oyarsa. Different from them, man is always interested in who is the ruler or the head of a town, a country, a planet, etc. Ransom asks which of the three races of the *hrossa*, the *séroni*, or the *pfifltriggi* is the ruling class. However, on Malacandra, all the *hnaus* are equal under Maleldil, and no one would think of becoming a ruler. Ransom has expected that the ruling class would be the *séroni* because they are the most advanced in science and have the widest knowledge about the universe and must be considered as superior to the other two races. Yet, as Lewis believes the truth of myth and allegory as well as that of science, Malacandrian people accordingly know that poetry and craftsmanship, the virtues of *hrossa* and *pfifultriggi*, are as important as scientific knowledge. In *The Great Divorce*, Lewis says quoting Milton's Satan, "The choice of every lost soul can be expressed in the words 'Better to reign in Hell than serve in Heaven.'" (*Divorce*, p. 69) Here in *Out of the Silent Planet*, man's keen interest in the ruling power is another indication that the earth is the fallen planet under Satan.

The following dialogue among some *séroni* about human wars, slavery etc. shows Lewis's criticism on man's attachment to ruling power.

> "It is because they have no Oyarsa," said one of the pupils.
> "It is because everyone of them wants to be a little Oyarsa himself," said Augray.
> "They cannot help it," said the old *sorn*. "There must be rule, yet how can creatures rule themselves? Beasts must be ruled by *hnau* and *hnau* by *eldila* and *eldila* by Maleldil. These creatures have no *eldila*. They are like one trying to lift himself by his own hair . . ." (p. 102)

On Malacandra, not only the desire for power but also the desire for possession is missing. For example, a *sorn* says when Ransom gives him a watch, "This gift ought to be given to a *pfifltrigg*. It rejoices my heart, but they would make more of it." (p.107) He sees the watch quite disinterestedly

and considers what is the best way to treat it rather than whether he wants it or not. The contrast between this *sorn* and greedy Divine shows off the difference between the Malacandrian and men.

Malacandrian people know how to control their desires. Or rather, they have no excessive desires and therefore do not have to control themselves in order to follow Maleldil's voice. For instance, though making children is as great a pleasure for *hrossa* as for men, they do not make too many children. A *hross* is surprised to hear that men is so eager to repeat the sexual pleasure that they sometimes make too many children to get enough food for them all. He says it is the same as wishing to eat all day long or to sleep after enough sleep. When Ransom asks him in retort, "But a dinner comes every day. This love, you say, comes only once while the *hross* lives?" (p. 72) the *hross* answers,

> But it takes his whole life. When he is young he has to look for his mate; and then he has to court her; then he begets young; then he rears them; then he remembers all this, and boils it inside him and makes it into poems and wisdom.... A pleasure is full grown only when it is remembered. You are speaking... as if the pleasure were one thing and the memory another. It is all one thing. (p. 73)

Lewis is not ascetically against having pleasures. On the contrary, he positively appreciates pleasures, since he finds "*pleasures* are shafts of the glory" sent from God. (*Malcolm*, p. 89) What he is against is pervertedly excessive attachment to pleasures. Pursuit of pleasures goes wrong when the repetition of pleasures apart from its source, i.e. God, becomes the primary objective, and on Malacandra, there is no such inordinate pursuit.

Besides, on Malacandra, that is within the Reality of heaven, pleasures also become real the way they do not on the earth. In *Letters to Malcolm*, Lewis talks of resurrection in heaven that it would be the senses rather than the body that are to resurrect:

> At present we tend to think of the soul as somehow "inside" the body. But the glorified body of the resurrection as I conceive it—the sensuous life raised from its death—will be inside the soul. As God is not in space but space is in God.... in the sense-bodies of the redeemed the whole New Earth will arise.... Sown in subjectivity, it rises in objectivity. (*Malcolm*, pp. 122–123)

The sensual pleasures we have on earth are subjective. They are felt only in ourselves, and their memory cannot be communicated to others without words, pictures or some other means. But none of these means are objective enough to express the inner pleasures exactly as they are felt inside us. However, as can be seen in the above quotation, Lewis believes that such pleasures on earth will be revived in heaven to be objective realities. On Malacandra, the appreciation of a pleasure does not end with the moment of the pleasant experience. It is consumated for the first time when the pleasure is given concrete Reality in a remembered form, for example, in poetry, as if it were raised in heaven. Compared to this, the way we have pleasures on the earth is incomplete.

* * *

Thus, on Malacandra, neither the *hrossa* or the *séroni* or the *pfifltriggi* do not have too much attachment for such desires as for power, for possession or for sexual pleasures, all of which are

often inordinately strong on the earth. Attachment to one's own desire is attachment to one's self, and the absence of attachment to desire means the absence of self-attachment. In *The Problem of Pain*, Lewis says,

> What is outside the system of self-giving is not earth, nor nature, nor "ordinary life", but simply and solely Hell.... The golden apple of selfhood... To be found with it in your hands is a fault: to cling to it, death. (pp. 140–141)

Throughout *Out of the Silent Planet*, thus, it is implied that the earth is now out of the heavenly region, for general ideas on the earth are based on the principle of hell, though most people are not aware of it. At the same time, however, it is also implied that such dominance of the hellish principle will not last for ever. Though the earth is at present keeping silence to the rest of heaven, it will be opened in the near future. Malacandrian Oyarsa says to Ransom,

> [Y]our world is not so fast shut as was thought in these parts of heaven.... The year we are now in... has long been prophesied as a year of stirrings and high changes and the siege of Thulcandra may be near its end. Great things are on foot. (pp. 142–143)

This "Great things" must be referring to the second coming of Christ or, within the framework of the Ransom science fiction trilogy, the eschatological victory of the good over evil in *That Hideous Strength*.

notes

1. cf. Arthur O. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being* (Harvard Univ. Press, 1936 & 1964), p59.
2. Chad Walsh, *The Literary Legacy of C. S. Lewis* (Harcourt, 1979), p. 107.
3. Roger Lancelyn Green and Walter Hooper, *C. S. Lewis: A Biography* (Harcourt, 1976), p. 172.
4. Walsh, *Literary Legacy*, p. 93.
5. Lewis, "Evil and God," *God*, p. 23. Cf. St. Augustine, *The City of God*, tr Henry Bettenson (Penguin, 1947; rpt. 1987), Book XII, p. 472.
6. Dabney Adams Hart, *Through the Open Door* (The Univ. of Alabama Press, 1984), p. 34.
7. Martha C. Sammons, *A Guide Through C. S. Lewis's Space Trilogy* (Cornerstone Books, 1980), p. 48.

III Perelandra

The second of Lewis's space trilogy is *Perelandra*. This is a story of "paradise protected" or "Paradise Lost prevented" based on the story of Satan's temptation of Eve. Especially, Milton's *Paradise Lost*, which has been one of Lewis's favourite poetical works, must have been in his mind when he wrote *Perelandra*.

The outline of its story is as follows:

> Elwin Ransom, who has been to Mars in *Out of the Silent Planet*, is now called from heaven and carried in a coffin to Venus, which is called Perelandra in this trilogy.
>
> This Perelanda is still a young planet where islands are floating in the sea, changing their shapes according to the underneath movement of waves. It is a paradisaical world. There, such aromatic and sweet fruit as Ransom has never tasted is growing as in the garden of Eden. On an island Ransom meets a woman who is green from the top to the toe, who is called Green Lady in this story. She is the first Queen of Perelandra and is ordained to be the first mother as well. Unlike the man who has long since fallen, she is still in a completely innocent state. While man has fallen through misuse of free will, she is not even conscious

that she is following Maleldil on her free will. She is not aware that one could possibly disobey Maleldil at all. She is surprised to hear from Ransom that men on the earth are living on fixed lands; because, though there is a fixed land also on Perelandra, Maleldil forbids her and King, her husband, to live on that land.

In the mean time, Weston arrives at Perelandra by a spaceship. Now he has become a worshipper of the Life-force, believing in the Creative Evolution. He insists that the Life-force, the Spirit, God and also Evil are all one and the same thing under different names. He even tries to identify himself with the Evil, who he thinks is the same as God and Power. When he calls out, "*I am* the Universe. I, Weston, am your God and your Devil. I call that Force into me completely. . . ," (p. 96) however, he suddenly falls down as if in a fit. When he wakes up again, he has been possessed of the Devil and become Un-man who has completely lost Weston's humane part. He begins the temptation of Green Lady, trying to seduce her to settle herself on the fixed land against Maleldil's forbiddance. To see that, Ransom realizes that the prevention of her fall is the task imposed on him by Maleldil. The temptation goes on ceaselessly days and nights, as Un-man does not need to sleep. Through long struggle, first by argument and then by physical combat, Ransom finally breaks Un-man's head and throws him into the infernal fire underground, while he himself is wounded in the ankle bitten by Un-man.

After that there is the coronation of the first King and Queen by the Oyarsas of Mars and Venus, followed by the naming of lands and animals by the new King. Having attended the coronation, Ransom is sent back to the earth in the coffin again.

The story was originally published as "*Voyage to Venus*", and reprinted as "*Perelandra*", suggesting the significance of the planet's name. Martha Sammons points out, "*Per* means perfect in Latin. *Peril* suggests the 'almost Fall.' Lewis spells it 'Parelandra' in *OSP* [*Out of the Silent Planet*], suggesting 'paradise'."[1] Hooper and Green suggest "Peri-landra" i.e. "fairyland", as well as "Paradise" from "Parelandra" in the first edition of *Out of the Silent Planet*.[2] Besides, I see that "Perelandra" also suggests "perennial land", as it finally avoids Un-man's temptation and will enjoy eternal bliss from Maleldil, free from that death or decay which is the punishment for sin.

Lewis says the story of *Perelandra* began with his "mental picture of the floating islands." ("Unreal Estates," *On Stories*, p. 144) On the other hand, Lewis's biography and his own letters show he wrote it just after *The Screwtape Letters* (a series of letters by a devil) and *A Preface to 'Paradise Lost'*. Therefore, it is probably because he had been concentratedly considering the nature of temptations in studying Milton's Satan and in writing *The Screwtape Letters* that the image of floating islands has developed into the present temptation story.

< The Essential Character of Evil in Perelandra >

St. Augustine defines evil as *privatio boni*, deprivation of good, or perversion of it. Especially relevant to *Perelandra* is his notion of evil as perversion of good: "it is not by nature but by a perversion that the rebellious creation differs from the good, which adheres to God."[3]

Evil's perversiveness is conspicuous in the way Un-man tempts Green Lady. He first tries to persuade her by logical argument, and when he has failed in this, tries to move her through her imagination. (This is a reflection of Lewis's conviction that man consists of reason and imagination and is influenced by the both elements.) And Un-man's temptation, either logical or imaginative,

always consists of perversion of Reality.

Un-man's logic is perverted because he takes up truth or something good and then infers false implication from that truth. The logic is not totally wrong, since its premise at least is true, but subtly crooked. For instance, he first pretends to obey Maleldil's forbiddance and then argues that although to live actually on the Fixed Island is prohibited, to make a story about it is not. He says,

> The world is made up not only of what is but of what might be. Maleldil knows both and wants us to know both. (p. 104)

Here, he speaks as if Green Lady's disobedience is a possibility or "what might be", though in fact, it is nothing but what should never be. Therefore, his logic is a perversion based on a false proposition. Besides, it is wrong also because to think of disobedience in mind even without actually doing it is itself a sin: as Jesus teaches his disciples that a sin in one's heart is already a sin before committed in action. (cf. Mattew, 5.28) Furthermore, it would be a misuse of imagination which is given by God as a faculty to grasp Reality.

When Un-man thus suggests to her to make up a story of breaking Maleldil's forbiddance, Green Lady reveals her innate innocence and faith in Maleldil, telling Un-man:

> But if I try to make the story about living on the Fixed Island I do not know how to make it about Maleldil. For if I make it that He has changed His command, that will not go. And if I make it that we are living there against His command, that is like making the sky all black and the water so that we cannot drink it and the air so that we cannot breathe it. But also, I do not see what is the pleasure of trying to make these things.(p. 112)

Since she recognizes Maleldil as the source of the whole world as well as of her life, she cannot even imagine any life to live against Him. Disobedience is not at all "what might be" for her; it is merely an impossible unreality; and that, a most miserable one. Therefore, she would not make such a story. Besides, here we see her belief in Maleldil's reasonableness and justice. She cannot imagine He would change the command capriciously. Such strong faith in Maleldil is what defends Green Lady against the temptation, and it is this faith that Eve fails to keep either in Genesis or in Milton's *Paradise Lost.*

When Un-man sees Green Lady hesitate to make a story of disobedience, he says that to make up a story is a new good which she does not yet know. He says that if she refuses it, it should be like refusing the waves of new good which Maleldil sends to her. In thus talking of supposed disobedience as if it were something good, he is trying to take advantage of the fact that everything still looks good to her innocent eyes. Presenting evil as a good, he is perverting the idea of both good and evil.

Furthermore, seeing Ransom hesitate to tell her about death, Un-man says that death is a new good and yet Ransom is rejecting it only because he is a sort of person who sticks to the old goods too much to accept new ones; that because Ransom is himself rejecting the new good "death", he wants to keep it also from her. Un-man even calls Ransom "evil" for rejecting death. In this argument, Un-man presents death perversively as a good though it is in fact a great evil, and then, on that false premise, condemns Ransom as evil. If death were really good, Ransom's attitudes

would be wrong, but Un-man's logic is false altogether because the first premise "death is good" is false.

Then, as man's original sin was the sin of disobedience through misuse of free will, Un-man tries to make Green Lady commit the same transgression. While talking with Ransom, she notices that she also has free will and that she can disobey Maleldil if she chooses. This means that the one who brings the consciousness of free will into Perelandra is not Satan or Un-man but Ransom. Though he is Maleldil's agent on Perelandra, as a man who is from the human society infected by the original sin, probably he is not able to avoid infecting the innocent Green Lady with a characteristic of fallen men, that is, with the tendency of regarding free will not as God's gift but men's natural property. On the other hand, the fact that Ransom has got her aware of her own free will can also be interpreted as an indication that it is Maleldil's will that she knows of her freedom to choose. When obedience to God is in question, free will is always ambivalent. It enables man to obey God freely, but on the other hand, it also makes it possible for him to fall away from Him. Of course, if the awareness of free will on the part of Green Lady is Maleldil's will, Maleldil wants her free obedience. But instead of telling her so, Un-man tells her that Maleldil has made her aware of it as the first step to her independence from Him.

> Maleldil is beginning to teach you to walk by yourself... You are becoming your own. That is what Maleldil wants you to do.... But could the taking away of your hand from His—the full growing up—the walking in your own way—could that ever be perfect unless you had, if only once, seemed to disobey Him? (p. 116)

When Green Lady asks him "How could one *seem* disobey?" Un-man answers,

> By doing what He only *seemed* to forbid.... A real disobeying, a real branching out, this is what He secretly longs for: secretly, because to tell you would spoil all.... These other commands of His--to love, to sleep, to fill this world with your children—you see for yourself that they are good. And they are the same in all worlds. But the command against living on the Fixed Island is not so. You have already learned that He gave no such command to my world. And you cannot see where the goodness of it is.... It is mere command. It is forbidding for the mere sake of forbidding.... In order that you may break it.... Do you think He is not weary of seeing nothing but Himself in all that He has made? ... To find the Other—the thing whose will is no longer His—that is Maleldil's desire. (pp. 116–117)

Because what Maleldil wants is a real obedience, Un-man's interpretation is again perverted.

Incidentally, these words of Un-man involve the theological problem of difficulty in knowing God's will. In real life, it is impossible for human beings to prove any commandment to be in fact God's will, and it is natural for them to wonder whether or not a commandment is really God's will, especially when the commandment seems unreasonable. In that case, if one is to accept it as God's will, one should accept it through faith, just on the ground that it is told by the authority of God, or of Jesus.

Green Lady has the faith required here. When Ransom, opposing Un-man, says, "Where can you taste the joy of obeying unless He bids you do something for which His bidding is the *only* reason?" she instantly understands him, saying:

> Oh, how well I see it! We cannot walk out of Maleldil's will: but He has given us a way to walk out of *our* will. And there could be no such way except a command like this. Out of our own will. It is like passing out through the world's roof into Deep Heaven. (p. 118)

The two interpretations of Maleldil's forbiddance, i.e. Un-man's and Ransom's, are not real alternatives for Green Lady, whose understanding is not clouded through the original sin, and who holds a true discrimination between falsity and the real truth. Her response to Ransom is as if she is just reminded of the obvious truth by him.

This is a set-back for Un-man. Yet, once defeated, he does not give up the temptation. He tries to build up another false logic by perverting a truth. Pretending to agree with Green Lady that she must give up her own will and obey Maleldil's will, he tells her that in order to give up her own will truly, it is necessary to give up her innermost will and desire, that is, the desire to follow Maleldil. His logic is like putting the cart before the horse. When the ultimate objective is to follow Maleldil, in order to abandon one's self will for achieving that objective, he says one should abandon even one's intrinsic will to obey Maleldil. Actually, it is only when self-centred will hinders a man from following Maleldil that the man should abandon his own will.

Ransom interrupts Un-man's argument with the story of the fall of Adam and Eve, trying to show Green Lady the disastrous corollary of disobedience to Maleldil. However, Un-man does not fall aback at all. On the contrary, he takes Ransom's story and continues it to tell her about the Incarnation, as a greatest good resulting from the disobedience. The idea that Adam's fall has in the long run turned out to be good because it brought about God's Incarnation, Passion, Death, and Resurrection, opening a way for men to become sons of God is called the idea of *Felix Culpa*. A most well-known passage expressing this idea is in Milton's *Paradise Lost*, where Adam exclaims to see a prophetic vision of Christ's redemption and regained Paradise on the earth:

> O goodness infinite, goodness immense!
> That all this good of evil shall produce,
> And evil turn to good; more wonderful
> Than that which by creation first brought forth
> Light out of darkness! Full of doubt I stand,
> Whether I should repent me now of sin
> By me done and occasioned, or rejoice
> Much more,that much more good thereof shall spring,
> To God more glory, more good will to men,
> From God, and over wrath grace shall abound. (XII, ll. 469–478)

This is "Milton's version of the idea expressed in the Mass for Holy Saturday: *O felix culpa talem ac tantum meruit habere redemptorum*— 'O blessed sin (or crime) that was rewarded by so good and so great a redeemer!'"[5] Arthur O. Lovejoy in "Milton and the Paradox of the Fortunate Fall" points out that this idea of *felix culpa* is not Milton's invention but a recurrent Christian thought since as early as the fourth century or even before that time. He explains the idea thus:

> It is a paradox which has at least the look of a formal antinomy. From the doctrinal premises accepted by Milton and implicit in the poem, the two conclusions between which Adam is represented as hesitating were equally inevitable; yet they were mutually repugnant. The

> Fall could never be sufficiently condemned and lamented; and likewise, when all its consequences were considered, it could never be sufficiently rejoiced over.... No devout believer could hold that it would have been better if the moving drama of man's salvation had never taken place: and consequently, no such believer could consistently hold that the first act of that drama, the event from which all the rest of it sprang, was really to be regretted. Moreover, the final state of the redeemed, the consummation of human history, would far surpass in felicity and in moral excellence the pristine happiness and innocence of the first pair in Eden—that state in which, but for the Fall, man would presumably have remained.

However, in *Perelandra*, Lewis opposes this idea of *felix culpa*. The idea can lead to the approval of Adam's sin and involves the possibility of seeing the fall as a part of God's providence. Lewis's emphasis is on that evil is evil even when it results in whatever good.

> For though the healing what was wounded and the straightening what was bent is a new dimension of glory, yet the straight was not made that it might be bent nor the whole that it might be wounded. (p. 215)

Ransom says to Un-man, "Of course good came of it. Is Maleldil a beast that we can stop His path...? Whatever you do, He will make good of it. But not the good He had prepared for you if you had obeyed Him.... And there were some to whom no good came nor ever will come." (p. 121) The some "to whom no good came nor ever will come" are those who are in hell, especially Satan. Therefore when Ransom presses Un-man with the question, "tell her all. What good came to you?" (p. 121) Un-man cannot answer him but only gives a long howl like a dog. Ransom has here directly addressed Satan in Un-man, and this howling is Satan's confession of his defeat to God and of the misery he has been tasting ever since his fall. In Lewis's fiction, evil is always powerless when faced by the real good. Here is no exception.

In fact, the powerlessness of evil can be seen not only here but throughout *Perelandra*. First of all, Satan cannot have taken Weston's body if Weston had not called him into himself. Then it is because Satan has no power to do any positive evil strong enough to destroy Green Lady's soul that the worst he might possibly be able to do is to cut her from God, the positive Good. In *The Screwtape Letters*, Screwtape the devil advises a younger devil to try to keep men away from God rather than try to positively put any evil thought in their mind.[7] It is the same here. Of course, it is also because alienation from God is itself the worst possible state of creatures imaginable that the devil tries to cut man from God. And the fact that this most evil state of life would make men miserable again shows the negative powerlessness of evil: while the good has a positive power to make creatures happy, evil can never make anyone, even the evil one oneself, happy.

* * *

When he has lost the battle in the field of logic, Un-man changes his strategy and starts addressing Green Lady's imagination. As I have discussed elsewhere,[8] Lewis sees imagination as an intuitive power into truth and reality. Yet, he is also aware of its frailty: that it is susceptible to the devil's attack.

Un-man tells Green Lady about women on the earth, that they have greater wisdom and better understanding than men. He also says that their wisdom gives them almost divine beauty, and suggests to her that since to live on the Fixed Island is a new, yet unknown good to her, if she should dare to live there and get the new knowledge, that knowledge would greatly increase her beauty:

> They always reach out their hands for the new and unexpected good, and see that it is good long before the men understand it. Their minds run ahead of what Maleldil has told them. They do not need to wait for Him to tell them what is good, but know it for themselves as He does. They are, as it were, little Maleldils. And because of their wisdom, their beauty is as much greater than yours... (p. 106)

If Green Lady comes to wish to be a "little Maleldil," it should be her fall. If she should "run ahead" of Maleldil, instead of asking Him to "prevent" her, that is, to lead her (Latin *prevenir* means "come before"), she should be so proud as to have lost her original innocence. Un-man talks as if being a "little Maleldil" were a virtue, yet it is only a false pretense. Or, Un-man may really believe it to be a virtue. Yet if so, it is a mistake characteristically devilish, for it was Satan's sin that he tried to take the place of God and became a rebellious angel.

Un-man then begins to tell Green Lady various stories of women, who are all heroic and achieve great self-sacrificial deeds for the good of their family, and that, even without the family's understanding. The stories affect Green Lady, and while she is listening to them, Ransom sees a serious change on her face. Instead of the original innocence, he reads there "the faintest touch of theatricality, the first hint of a self-admiring inclination to seize a grand rôle in the drama of her world." (p. 133) This "self-admiring inclination" is a sign of pride that Lewis always warns against as the greatest evil and the essence of the fall. Thus, In *Perelandra*, Satan tries to build in Green Lady her self-image as such a great Queen who, in spite of the King's opposition, carries out the great deed of getting independence of Maleldil so as to be "like Maleldil" herself. If she should come to think of herself as the one who is rightly, or legitimately, capable of being like Maleldil, then, Satan's temptation has succeeded.

In order to stir her pride, Un-man then gives her a feather coat, showing her her image in a mirror. In thus trying to make her wish to look beautiful, he is trying to teach her vanity; for we may remember that a picture of a woman with a mirror in her hand, expressing her "vanity", has been traditionally an emblem of Pride.[9] When Green Lady is looking into the mirror, Ransom reads incipient pride in her face, which makes him decide to prevent further temptation by killing Un-man through physical combat. Ransom's act of crashing Un-man's head and throwing him into the subterranean fire can be interpreted as an execution of the sentence of God on Satan that the seed of Eve "shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel" (Genesis, 3,15) and so is it that Ransom is bitten in his ankle.

In *Perelandra*, thus it is shown that in the long run, Lewis's evil is weaker than the good, both intellectually and physically.

< Misery of Evil >

Lewis portrays evil as intrinsically miserable. This is also true of Weston. His misery is revealed when he recovers his consciousness in Un-man for a short time. For those bound to hell, life is continual degradation into darkness. Weston, who is now in hell, has come to see man's life that way.

> Picture the universe as an infinite globe . . . We are born on the surface of it and all our lives we are sinking through it. When we've got all the way through then we are what's called Dead: we've got into the dark part inside, the real globe. If your God exists, He's not in the globe—He's outside, like a moon. (p. 168)

In his view all men are born on the surface of the earth and gradually sink down deep into the absolute darkness. This darkness is decisively alienated from God. Lewis in *The Great Divorce* expresses his idea that for those who choose hell, the world will turn out to have been from the beginning a part of hell. (*Divorce*, p. 7) Weston has been in hell's darkness since the beginning, when he identified God with the Devil and chose that Devil for God.

In the momentarily awakened consciousness, Weston cries out from hell, describing the world around him as, "Darkness, worms, heat, pressure, salt, suffocation, stink." (p. 169) Hell is such a hideous and awful place while being at the same time such darkness and void as almost nonexistent. Yet, although Weston rightly knows hell is a hideous place, now he cannot but feel it even more realistic than heaven. It is another example of the perversion of evil. He does not, or cannot, believe in God's salvation and finally drawn into hell by Satan, crying,

> Oh, my God! . . . Oh! Ransom, Ransom! We shall be killed. Killed and put back under the rind. . . . Don't let them get me again. . . . O, God, here comes the dark! (p. 171)

His repentance and cry for heaven come too late. Weston is lost forever the same way as Marlow's Faustus who cries to God for salvation when it has already become too late. Lewis believes that "No soul that seriously and constantly desires joy will ever miss it" (*Divorce*, pp. 72–73) and therefore that all who really wish heaven can enter it. Yet on the other hand, he also admits that when a person goes too far into evil he would not be able to repent and come back to the way to heaven. In Weston's final fall, Lewis shows hell as a disgusting place even for those who have by themselves chosen to go there. He shows fear and misery in hell side by side with the peaceful happiness in paradise, so as to illustrate his belief that good is preferable while evil is simply abominable.

< Faith and Providence >

In *Perelandra*, as in other works, Lewis expresses his idea of the right faith in God. Lewis admits that the existence of evil can be an obstacle to faith.[10] Ransom, too, in his struggle with Un-man cannot help doubting the goodness and justice of Maleldil. He wonders why Maleldil does not come and help him in the battle against the evil.

> Why did no miracle come? Or rather, why no miracle on the right side? For the presence of the Enemy was in itself a kind of Miracle.... He could not understand why Maleldil should remain absent when the Enemy was there in person. (p. 140)

Ransom feels as if Maleldil is *Deus absconditus*, but in Lewis's stories—in *the Chronicles of Narnia*, in *Till We Have Faces* and also in the Ransom trilogy—God is never *absconditus* even when He seems to be. Sincere prayers and questions are always answered:

> as suddenly and sharply as if the solid darkness about him had spoken with articulate voice, he knew that Maleldil was not absent.... And then—he wondered how it had escaped him till now—he was forced to perceive that his own coming to Perelandra was at least as much of a marvel as the Enemy's. That miracle on the right side, which he had demanded, had in fact occurred. He himself was the miracle. (p. 140–141)

With this revelation about his role on Perelandra, he remembers the impression which he had on the voyage to Mars, that "the triple distinction of truth from myth and of both from fact was purely terrestrial—was part and parcel of that unhappy division between soul and body which resulted from the Fall." (p. 143–144)

Since Perelandra is continuous with, or in fact a part of, heaven, the physical combat of Ransom against Un-man in the material dimension of that world is at the same time a metaphysical battle of Maleldil through Ransom against Satan. The victory of Ransom over Un-man means not only the prevention of Venus's fall at the crucial point of its history but also triumph of Good over Evil on the mythological level.

In *Perelandra*, Maleldil, or God, saves Venus through Ransom as His agent. On the earth, He got incarnated Himself for the redemption of mankind. At the same time, He has made men sons of God through the Son. Once men have become sons of God, then, God can use one of them on Venus, instead of sending the Son, his second person, onto the earth again.

The name "Ransom" means "redemption". And this family name of Ransom suggests Maleldil's providence that Ransom has been selected and predestinated, since the time of his forefathers, to "ransom" Perelandra.

As Walsh points out, on Perelandra "he truly earns the name of Ransom, as he enacts the role of a kind of savior, a little Christ, in rescuing that virgin planet from the downfall that Tellus suffered."[11] Setsuko Nakao also sees "a Christ figure" in Ransom as the "Saviour for the Perelandra," while noting on the other hand that "Ransom is not Christ personified, for their situations are radically different.... Ransom is Christian faith personified,"[12] and points out the similarity between Jesus Christ and Ransom: the vehement agony, exhaustion, the bleeding wound in the heel, etc. She also says that Ransom's journey through the underworld in the struggle with Un-man reminds us of Christ's death before the Sabbath.[13] Robert Smith also sees a "Christ-imagery" in Ransom.[14] Yet, neither Walsh, or Nakao, or Smith says Ransom is an allegory of Christ, and they are right on this point. For,we learn in Lewis's The *Allegory of Love* that he thinks of allegory as embodiment of something immaterial or less real than the allegorical figure[15] and Christ is definitely not less real than Ransom. It would be better to see Ransom's victory as a case of fulfillment of the Old Testament prophesy of Satan's defeat.

* * *

In Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Eve is tempted by her own physical hunger as well as by Satan.

> Meanwhile the hour of noon drew on, and waked
> An eager appetite, raised by the smell
> So savory of that fruit, which with desire,
> Inclinable now grown to touch or taste,
> Solicited her longing eye... (IX, ll. 739–743)

However, Lewis has excluded such physical temptations as hunger and focused the problem on such spiritual matters as reason and pride. By this he is stressing the point that obedience to God depends on man's will.

Lewis says about the obedience to God, "If you ask why we should obey God, in the last resort the answer is, 'I am.' To know God is to know that our obedience is due to Him." (*Joy*, p. 185) He finds that God deserves our unconditional obedience just because God is God. Yet, while the apple in Genesis is regarded as a pledge of obedience, eating of which is evil only because it is the transgression of God's inhibition, Lewis's Fixed Island turns out to be more than a mere pledge of faith. Maleldil's inhibition has a positive good in itself. Green Lady notices this and says to Ransom,

> How could I wish to live there except because it was Fixed? And why should I desire the Fixed except because it was Fixed? And why should I desire the Fixed except to make sure—to be able on one day to command where I should be the next and what should happen to me... to draw my hands out of Maleldil's, to say to Him, 'Not thus, but thus'.... That would have been cold love and feeble trust. (p. 208)

Trying to live on the fixed land is like trying to keep today's manna for tomorrow's use. It is a wish to get an assurance for future. Such a wish cannot come except from a doubt about God's providence, that is, doubt that God should see and provide beforehand all what we need. True faith does not allow for any such doubt. As Kilby and Manlove suggest, "the floating islands adjusted to the movement of the water [could] be a symbol of the Christian's abandonment to God's daily direction,"[16] and "a near-perfect (the element missing is choice) emblem of that endless delighted self-resignation which is at the heart of the Lady's innocence."[17] To have faith means to believe that God always gives us enough and be satisfied with what is given. Green Lady in her innocence sees this, while Un-man has never seen any good in Maleldil's forbiddance nor notice anything wrong in living on the Fixed Island. Thus, while the innocent knows good and evil, the evil one does not understand either good nor evil. Evil is weaker than the good even in understanding, too. Green Lady says,

> it is waking that understands sleep and not sleep that understands waking. There is an ignorance of evil that comes from being young; there is a darker ignorance that comes from doing it, as men by sleeping lose the knowledge of sleep.... It was by the Evil One himself that he brought us out of the first. Little did that dark mind know the errand on which he really came to Perelandra! (p. 209)

We may as well notice here that the problem involved in Maleldil's forbiddance is also that which Socrates (or Plato) has taken up in *Euphyphro*, namely, the problem of whether the good is good because God wills it or God wills it because it is good. Socrates's question is, "whether where the right is, there also is holiness, or where holiness is, there also is the right."[18] Socrates sees that the right involves holiness, but not *vice versa*. Lewis, however, answers to the problem as that God's will is good for the very reason that it is God's will but at the same time the good becomes God's will because it is good. Maleldil's forbiddance should be observed not only because it is His forbiddance but also because the forbiddance itself is good. The two propositions in Plato is not real alternatives, but two sides of one and the same thing. Lewis maintains: "God is not merely good, but goodness; goodness is not merely divine, but God." ("The Poison of Subjectivism," *Christian Reflections*, p. 80.)

* * *

Thus in this book, Lewis attempts to answer the long discussed theological problem of the relationship between God's will and free will of man as His moral agent. When a man tries to do some hard task which he believes to be what God wants him to do, does he do so because he has chosen to do it or because God wills it? In Ransom's case, when he feels unavoidable responsibility to protect Perelandra, he does not see the task as merely forced upon him. In the faith in Maleldil, his will is at one with His. Then, "Predestination and freedom were apparently identical. He could no longer see any meaning in the many arguments he had heard on this subject." (p. 149) He hears the voice, "My name also is Ransom." (p. 148) This must be the voice of Jesus who has once sacrificed Himself to ransom the humankind. It is only those who really achieve redemption that can truly be given the name of "Ransom". That redemption can be made only through true faith, and in true faith, man's will and God's will is ultimately at one. This is the atonement in the true sense of the word, "at-one-ment". Moreover, here is also expressed Lewis's conviction that true faith must go together with action, and that, in every moment of one's life. He holds in *Letters to Malcolm*: "We have been speaking of religion as a pattern of behaviour—which, if contentedly departmental, cannot really be Christian behaviour." (*Malcolm*, p. 31) He says that the Lord's prayer, "Thy will be done," is the petition not merely that I may patiently suffer God's will but also that I may vigorously do it.... In the long run I am asking to be given 'the same mind which was also in Christ'...'Thy will be done—by me—now'." (*Malcolm*, p. 26)

Ransom gains such true atonement through the physical combat against Un-man. Therefore the combat turns out to be not only for the ransom of Perelandra but also for Ransom's redemption of himself. Or rather, when we remember that Perelandra is still in a state of unfallen innocence and needs no redemption, the significance of his name "Ransom" lies in the very fact that he is the one who achieves real ransom of himself from the original sin. Actually, Ransom ceases to get older since his voyage to Perelandra, which is a sign of the fact that he has regained the paradisaical state of life, as a regenerated man. His trip to and from Venus in a coffin, the battle against the devil deep under the sea and in the long way through womb-like darkness are all symbolically suggesting Ransom's death of old self before regeneration, showing him undergo mythical death

and rebirth in what may be called the "metaphysical" world of Perelandra.

notes

1. Sammons, p. 170.
2. Hooper and Green, p. 172.
3. St. Augustine, *The City of God*, tr. Henry Bettenson (Penguin 1047; rpt. 1987) Book XII, p. 472.
4. John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, ed. Scott Elledge (Norton, 1975), XII, ll. 469–478.
5. Scott Elledge, "Background Notes on Certain Important Concept and Topics in *Paradise Lost*," *Paradise Lost*, by John Milton, ed. Scott Elledge (Norton, 1975) p. 398.
6. Arthur O Lovejoy, "Milton and the Paradox of the Fortunate Fall," *ELH*, 1937, pp. 162–163.
7. cf., "It is funny how mortals always picture us as putting things into their minds: in reality our best work is done by keeping things out." (*Screwtape*, p. 25)
8. "C. S. Lewis's Approach to the Supernatural Reality," 二松学舎大学国際政経論集　第三号 (1996)
9. cf. for example, James Hall, *Dictionary of Subjects & Symbols in Art* (Harper & Row, 1974), "Pride", p. 253.
10. Lewis *pain*, passim etc.
11. Chad Walsh, "Reeducation of the Fearful Pilgrim," in Peter Schakel ed., *The Longing for a Form* (The Kent State Univ. Press, 1977), p. 71.
12. Setsuko Nakao, "Surprised by Joy: the theme of Salvation in the Fiction of C. S. Lewis," Diss. Sophia Univ. 1985, p. 182.
13. Nakao, pp. 180–181.
14. Richard Houston Smith, *Patches of Godlight* (Univ. of Georgia Press, 1981), p 182.
15. cf. Lewis, *Allegory*, p. 45.
16. Clyde S. Kilby, *The Christian World of C. S. Lewis* (Eerdman's, 1954), p. 99.
17. C. N. Manlove, *Modern Fantasy: Five Studies* (Cambridge Univ. Press, 1975), p. 120.
18. Plato, "Euphyphro," *Plato I*, Loeb Classical Library, with English tr. by Harold North Fowler (Harvard Univ. Press, 1914; rpt. 1982), pp. 45–47.

IV That Hideous Strength

The last of the Ransom trilogy, *That Hideous Strength*, is a story of battle between evil that is trying to dominate the earth and Maleldil's good force that tries to prevent it. The protagonists of this story are a young couple, Mark Studdock and his wife Jane. Though they are human, they are involved in the metaphysical battle between supernatural powers and, in spite of being a man and wife, join the opposite parties and respectively experience the evil and the good from within.

The outline of the story is as follows:

> Mark is a fellow at Bracton College at Belbury, where the National Institute of Co-ordinate Experiment (N.I.C.E.) is going to be established. This institute claims to be aiming at scientific control of the mankind so as to efficiently improve the human race as a whole. It offers Mark a post which at first seems to be good, though the first thing he is told to do is nothing better than writing fraudulent newspaper articles in order to make the public accept the N.I.C.E.'s brainwashing experiments on criminals, under a pretext of psychological treatment. He hesitates a little, but begins working for the N.I.C.E. anyway, even without consulting his wife. As a result, then, he loses his original post at the College.
>
> Meanwhile, Jane sees in her dream a prisoner having his head screwed off. The prisoner is Franços Alcasan, a guillotined murderer, though Jane does not know about the execution until she reads the next morning paper. As she is scared by the dream for the identity of the prisoner in the dream and the executed Alcasan, one of Mark's colleagues at Bracton College, Mr. Dimble, and his wife advise her to go to St. Anne's to see a Grace Ironwood. At

St. Anne's Jane is told by Grace that her dream must have been true because one of her ancestors had such clairvoyant power and she has probably inherited that power.

The people at St. Anne's are a group of men and women who are preparing for a war under Ransom against the evil power which is now working through the N.I.C.E. They ask Jane to join them. At first, Jane refuses the offer because she wishes to be left alone, but then she has another dream back at home—this time, a dream of a corpse with a long beard—and goes to St. Anne's after all. There, she meets the Pendragon of the group, who is Ransom, now called "*the Fisher King*". He is unable to walk because of the wound he got in the struggle with Un-man, but he has got younger since he came back from Perelandra and now looks as if he were little more than twenty though in fact he is in his late forties. Somehow Jane feels comfort when she is with him.

In the N.I.C.E., Mark is shown a "Head", which is the executed Alcasan's head kept from decaying in the laboratory, provided nutrition and oxygen through tubes. The N.I.C.E. People call this "resurrection" and tries to hypertrophy the brain in an attempt at creating a new intellectual species of mankind. They even regard it literally as their own "Head", or commander.

Meanwhile, the dead old man with a long beard who appeared in Jane's dream turns out to be an ancient druid Marlin, a famous magician at the time of King Arthur, buried somewhere under Bracton Wood. Both the N.I.C.E. and Ransom's company believe that the party which succeeds in getting Marlin's help will win the battle, and try to find his burial place with Jane's dream as a clue. However, he wakes up in his grave before either of them find him, and comes to St. Anne's by himself. He becomes Ransom's man, while the N.I.C.E. mistakes a tramp for Marlin and takes him back to their institute. Since the members of the N.I.C.E. believe that Marlin speaks in Latin, they talk to the tramp in Latin and naturally fail to make themselves understood. Ransom sends the real Marlin into the N.I.C.E. in the disguise of an interpreter. At a banquet there, Marlin confuses speech of the N.I.C.E. people and completely demolish the N.I.C.E.'s organization. In the confusion, most of the central men of the N.I.C.E. die, killing each other or committing suicide, or in a flood or by an earthquake.

The end of the N.I.C.E. is the end of Ransom's task on the earth. Perelandra's Oyarsa, the gurdian angel Perelandra, comes to take him away to his planet, where Ransom is to be healed his wound and live an eternal life. Mark and Jane start their new life together.

The structure of this story is the most diagrammatically meticulous of all Lewis's works. Throughout the book, there can be seen clear dichotomy of the good and evil: St. Anne's and the N.I.C.E., Ransom and the Head, Logres and Britain, and Mark and Jane. In the N.I.C.E., distrust, lies and inner conflicts are daily routine, while at St.Anne's, people live in trust and honest harmony. The N.I.C.E.'s Head is artificially kept from decaying. It is unnatural. On the other hand, St. Anne's head, Pendragon Ransom, can be said *super*natural who has ceased to get older since his voyage to Perelandra. The parallelism is such that D. E. Glover comments on it:

> In fact, the one major criticism which we might make is that the very elaborateness of and precision of balance and antithesis in the structure tend to deflect our attention from the theme so that the structure becomes sometimes overelaborate and draws attention to itself.[1]

Through the opposition of the N.I.C.E. and St. Anne's, Lewis makes the nature of the good and evil into relief against each other and especially draws our attention to those evils which threaten the people in the modern scientific era.

< Morality and scienctism >

Lewis has often been regarded as against science, especially for writing this story, in which, the N.I.C.E., a scientific organization, is a manifest evil. However, Lewis avowdly denies that he is against science itself. He admits its utility and explicitly writes in a passage whithin the story that the physical sciences are "good and innocent in themselves." (p. 203) In "A reply to Professor Haldane," Lewis writes,

> The 'good' scientist is put in precisely to show that 'scientists' as such are not the target. To make the point clearer, he leaves my N.I.C.E. because he finds he was wrong in his original belief that 'it had something to do with science' . . . To make it clearer yet . . . the man almost irresistibly attracted by the N.I.C.E. is described . . . as one whose 'education had been neither scientific nor classical—merely "Modern".' . . . And finally, what we are obviously up against throughout the story is not scientists but officials. . . .
> What, then, was I attacking? Firstly, a certain view about values: the attack will be found, undisguised, in *The Abolition of Man*. Secondly, I was saying . . . that to be a friend of 'The World' is to be an enemy of God. (*On Stories*, p. 73)

What he thinks wrong is "'scientism'—a certain outlook on the world which is casually connected with the popularisation of the sciences," ("A reply to Professor Haldane," *On Stories*, p. 71) which sometimes neglects the vital moral law. Lewis is also against the naturalism which assumes that nothing exists outside the natural world that is objectively provable by scientific experiments, and this naturalism is also involved in scientism. By holding naturalism and denying the intuitive power of aesthetic imagination and moral consciousness, the scientism deprives people of the way to the metaphysical objective Reality, i.e. God's Reality. The only truth left for the people will be, then, scientific material facts, which they cannot but take as the only "reality". Furthermore, since those facts are proven by science and in that sense "objective", scientific facts become the only "objective reality" to them. The moral law, which is an integral part of the true objective Reality, is wrongly taken as merely subjective.

In *The Abolition of Man*, Lewis condemns modern education for teaching morality as a matter of relative or subjective values. He starts his argument with the following quotation from a school textbook:

> 'When the man said *That is sublime*, he appeared to be making a remark about the waterfall. . . . Actually . . . he was not making a remark about the waterfall, but a remark about his own feelings. What he was saying was really *I have feelings associated in my mind with the word "Sublime"* or shortly, *I have sublime feelings.*' (*Abolition*, p. 14)

Against this, Lewis argues:

> the man who says *This is sublime* cannot mean *I have sublime feelings*. . . . The feelings which make a man call an object sublime are not sublime feelings but feelings of veneration. If *This is sublime* is to be reduced at all to a statement about the speaker's feelings, the proper translation would be *I have humble feelings.* (*Abolition*, pp. 14–15)

In *The Abolition of Man*, Lewis rejects such Kantian notion as that the ethical reaction and feelings of man "rest not so much upon the nature of the external things that arouse them as upon each

person's own disposition to be moved by these to pleasure or pain."[2] He emphatically insists that value and moral good and evil exist objectively, independent of man's feelings. When man should abandon the traditional value and morality, nothing but power and desire would move the mankind. Then whatever progress science may make, it would be used not for the good of all the men but for only a few.

> Man's conquest of Nature, if the dreams of some scientific planners are realized, means the rule of a few hundreds of men over billions upon billions of men. There neither is nor can be any simple increase of power on Man's side. Each new power won by man is a power *over* man as well....
> The final stage is come when Man by eugenics, by pre-natal conditioning, and by an education and propaganda based on a perfect applied psychology, has obtained full control over himself. Human nature will be the last part of Nature to surrender to Man.... For the power of Man to make himself what he pleases means, as we have seen, the power of some men to make other men what they please. (*Abolition*, pp. 71–72)

In *That Hideous Strength*, Lewis gives illustrations to what he says in *The Abolition of Man*. Science has its limitations. It cannot, at least not yet, grasp all the objective truth even on the material level. When scientist comes to doubt their scientific capacity of attaining truth, there is a possibility of their degradation, especially when they have abandoned morality on the ground that the moral law is not "objective", i.e. scientific, truth:

> The physical sciences ... had already, even in Ransom's own time, begun to be warped, had been subtly manoeuvred in a certain direction. Despair of objective truth had been increasingly insinuated into the scientists; indifference to it, and a concentration upon mere power, had been the result.... The very experiences of the dissecting room and the pathological laboratory were breeding a conviction that the stifling of all deep-set repugnances was the first essential for progress. And now, all this had reached the stage at which its dark contrivers thought they could safely begin to bend it back so that it would meet that other and earlier kind of power.... You could not have done it with Nineteenth-Century scientists. Their firm objective materialism would have excluded it from their minds; and even if they could have been made to believe, their inherited morality would have kept them from touching dirt.... It was different now. Perhaps few or none of the people at Belbury knew what was happening; but once it happened, they would be like straw in fire. What should they find incredible, since they believed no longer in a rational universe? What should they regard as too obscene, since they held that all morality was a mere subjective by-product of the physical and economic situations of men? The time was ripe. From the point of view which is accepted in Hell, the whole history of our Earth had led up to this moment. (p. 203)

In 1992, John Lucas says in a lecture given to mark the fiftieth anniversary of *The Abolition of Man*,

> 'The Abolition of Man',... was a sustained attack on hard-line scientific anti-humanism.... The intervening fifty years have largely vindicated Lewis.... the values of the humanistic West are in the ascendant, and even in philosophy, though there are still subjectivists who maintain that all our values are but projections of our personal attitudes, they mostly now admit that this is an 'error theory', which goes against the grain of our ordinary understanding, and needs to be argued for pretty convincingly, if it is ever to get off the

> ground. The onus of proof is on the sceptic, not the defender of objectivity, and talk of the inevitable decline of western values seems strangely dated to modern ears.[3]

Lucas also says that "Lewis was particularly afraid of genetic engineering, and in this, again, he was prescient."[4]

Frost in the N.I.C.E. tells Mark "to be strictly objective." When the N.I.C.E. people charge Mark of murder that Mark has actually had nothing to do with, Frost says to him,

> Resentment and fear are both chemical phenomena. Our reactions to one another are chemical phenomena. Social relations are chemical relations. You must observe these feelings in yourself in an objective manner. Do not let them distract your attention from the facts. (p. 255)

He reduces everything to the level of chemical science which he thinks explains even our mental attitudes by the movement of atoms in our brains. He tries to repress or destroy man's natural moral reactions for the reason that such moral reactions are nothing more than subjective distractions from the chemical facts which he takes for the only reality.

Lewis thinks of morality as consisting of three parts: harmony within each individual, harmony between man and man, and relationship between man and God. (*Mere Christianity*, p. 67) In the N.I.C.E. all of three parts of morality are shown to be corrupted.

In the relationships to other people, the N.I.C.E. members do not have any standard of good and evil to move or bind them through their conscience, for they have abandoned morality altogether. They might do anything without guilty feelings. Therefore, no one can trust even his own fellows. They try to control others by deception, by lies and power, and even take it for granted to do so. Miss Hardcastle says to Mark, "don't believe everything you're told." (p. 70)

Deception and secret are manifold and everywhere in the N.I.C.E. The Director of the N.I.C.E., Horace Jules, thinks he has the real power as the head of the institute. However, he is actually nothing but a figurehead who is set to the position just because he happens to be well-known among the nation. The person in the real power is the Deputy Director, Wither. But still, he does not have the highest power in the N.I.C.E. though most members of the institute are deceived and believe he does. In the central room of the N.I.C.E., there is the guillotined François Alcasan's "Head", about which only a few of the innermost circle of the institute know. Those few people in the know are taking orders given through its mouth, believing them to be orders of Alcasan who has survived death. However, the orders are actually coming from the supernatural evil power that is now invading the earth through the N.I.C.E. Only Wither and Straik know that fact and they keep silent about it.

Deception and untruthfulness is also seen in the way the N.I.C.E. people draw its would-be members into the institute. When Mark is offered a post, he is not told the details of the work, nor whether his position would have a viable future. While he is still undecided, the N.I.C.E. entraps him by making it impossible for him to keep his present job at the college. Mark is then hired by the N.I.C.E. for less than half the salary offered him at first.

The ultimate means by which the N.I.C.E. controls men is threatening. As Straik says, "No one goes out of the N.I.C.E. Those who try to turn back will perish in the wilderness," (p. 80) a true

scientist Hingest, who has found the N.I.C.E. wrong and tried to go out, is killed on his way. The N.I.C.E. steals Mark's wallet and leaves it near the spot of the murder so as to trump up a charge, and tries, by threatening him with arrest, to keep him in their control. Even when there is not so much as to be called deception, there is no honesty nor frankness in the N.I.C.E. Miss Hardcastle says to Mark, "Making things clear is the one thing the D. D. [i.e. the Deputy Director, Wither] can't stand, . . . That's not how he runs the place." (p. 97) What is expected of the members of the N.I.C.E. is what they call "elasticity", (pp. 94ff) or puppet-like obedience to whatever orders given them.

The N.I.C.E. will take any means to achieve its aims. It makes a mock riot and put the whole town under its own emergency police so as to cut the town off from the outer world and establish absolute control over it. Then it fabricates some articles in the papers to justify that emergency control.

Such lawlessness is justice from the viewpoint of the N.I.C.E. people, to whom reign by virtue or the moral law is from the first outset out of the question. Besides, since they reject any objective standard of good and evil, they find everything justifies itself by the mere fact of occurring: as Frost says, "Existence is its own justification." (p. 295) This corruption of morality is prominent when we compare the N.I.C.E. to St. Anne's and see the clear difference between the good and the evil parties. In St. Anne's there is no need for deception where the people voluntarily get together around Ransom and are ready to fight for the good.

If lawlessness and deception are two characteristics of the N.I.C.E., its slight on personal dignity is another. Though the N.I.C.E. aims at improving the level of man's intelligence, it does not try to achieve that end by the education of the whole mass of people. Frost says,

> A large, unintelligent population is now becoming a deadweight. . . . You are to conceive the species as an animal which has discovered how to simplify nutrition and locomotion to such a point that the old complex organs and the large body is therefore to disappear. Only a tenth part of it will now be needed to support the brain. The individual is to become all head. The human race is to become all Technocracy. (pp. 258–259)

Lewis holds that man was created by God as having both mind and body. Senses and emotions are as important as the intellectual "head" for man not only in keeping physical life but also in getting knowledge about the reality of his own existence, such as about his relationships with others or about his relationship with God, so that he might be able to remain, or become "man" as is intended by God. However, the N.I.C.E. people fail to see man in this way and does not hesitate to liquidate those whom it finds unnecessary. Other people, whom the N.I.C.E. finds worth keeping, are kept alive only to be used by it, having had their humanity and individuality destroyed or deprived. Mark is told, "You've got to make yourself useful." (p. 70)

Wither says to Frost on greeting Mark, "You need not doubt that I would open my arms to receive—to absorb—to assimilate this young man." (p. 243) These words of Wither sound as if he were about to devour Mark to show his wholehearted welcome. And here, we see Lewis's idea which is also in *The Screwtape Letters* and later in *Till We Have Faces*, that evil ones devour those whom they love. Actually, by absorption and assimilation, the N.I.C.E. is going to reduce Mark to

its mechanical part. In order for that they force him to undergo a series of objectivity training to kill his humane sensibility.

It is also shown that in the N.I.C.E., morality within each individual, that is, the right harmony in each man is also broken. The people in the N.I.C.E. not only neglect or destroy others' humane personality but also willingly give up their own humanity.

The most conspicuous example of this is Wither. In this book, we see a ladder of people from heaven to hell and this Wither is the most hellish damned one, who has thrown away his own humanity completely.

In *The Problem of Pain*, Lewis writes,

> The characteristic of lost souls is "their rejection of everything that is not simply themselves".... The taste for the other, that is, the very capacity for enjoying good, is quenched in him except in so far as his body still draws him into some rudimentary contact with an outer world. Death removes this last contact.... And what he finds there is Hell. (*Pain*, p. 111)

Wither has long rejected the world around him, and that rejection has now become his nature.

> What had been in his far-off youth a merely aesthetic repugnance to realities that were crude or vulgar, had deepened and darkened, year after year, into a fixed refusal of everything that was in any degree other than himself. He had passed ... into the complete void ... (p. 353)

Like Un-man in *Perelandra*, he needs little sleep, and works like a machine.

> He had learned to withdraw most of his consciousness from the task of living, to conduct business, even, with only a quarter of his mind. Colours, tastes, smells, and tactual sensations no doubt bombarded his physical senses in the normal manner: they did not now reach his ego. The manner and outward attitude to men which he had adopted half a century ago were now an organization which functioned almost independently like a gramophone and to which he could hand over his whole routine of interviews and committees. (p. 250)

Since he has determinedly refused all the realities, to say nothing of the Reality of heaven, he has already been damned before he dies. When he is confronting his physical death it does not come home to him at all. Whether he is physically dead or not does not make any difference to him:

> He had willed with his whole heart that there should be no reality and no truth, and now even the imminence of his own ruin could not wake him.... With eyes wide open, seeing that the endless terror is just about to begin and yet (for the moment) unable to feel terrified, he watches passively, not moving a finger for his own rescue, while the last links with joy and reason are severed ... (p. 353)

Another example is Frost. He has long been a materialist who believes that "all which appears in the mind as motive or intention is merely a by-product of what the body is doing." (p. 357) He is the type of such a strict naturalist as Lewis argues against in *Miracles* that if our mental processes were determined wholly by the motions of atoms in our brain, we should have no reason to suppose that our beliefs are true; and hence we should have no reason for supposing my brain to be composed of atoms.(cf. *Miracles*, p. 19)

To Lewis, materialism is self-contradictory and cannot be true, and naturalism is discredited for the same reason. In *That Hideous Strength*, Frost's materialism which denies any voluntary motive or intention may have been only a theoretical belief at first, but, since he got into the N.I.C.E., he has actually come to taste that cerebrally entertained theory.

> Increasingly, his actions had been without motive. He did this and that, he said thus and thus, and did not know why. His mind was a mere spectator. He could not understand why that spectator should exist at all. He resented its existence, even while assuring himself that resentment also was merely a chemical phenomenon. (p. 357)

He has reduced himself to a mechanical being without any free will. Only once, he has nearly realized that "he had been wrong from the beginning, that souls and personal responsibility existed." (p. 358) However, he so much hates to accept this half-seen truth that, instead of admitting it, he flings himself into fire, half suspecting that "death itself might not after all cure the illusion of being a soul." (p. 358)

In Frost, Lewis is criticizing those who hold that morality and psychological movement can be explained away in terms of physical cause-and-effect sequences. Lewis believes that man as a soul has free will that always accompanies personal responsibility. However, Frost has given up his free will given by God, thereby denying himself the status of a respectable soul, and by himself ceases to be a man.

< Weakness of the N.I.C.E. >

The N.I.C.E. appears as a powerful institute to its members as well as to the outer world, with a strong hierarchy inside and with its own private police force outside. However, when confronted by the genuinely good, it reveals its weakness likewise as the evil in all the other works by Lewis, such as *The Screwtape Letters, Out of the Silent Planet, Perelandra* and *in the Chronicles of Narnia.*

Frost has clairvoyant power and reads Jane's mind from within the N.I.C.E. when she is at home. However, once she is in St. Anne's, he can no longer look into her thoughts, while Jane sees things going on in the N.I.C.E., such as Alcasan's head and Hingest's murder. This asymmetry is an example of the good's superiority over evil.

Another example of the N.I.C.E.'s weakness when faced by good is the fact that contrary to the expectations of the N.I.C.E., plans carried out by them sometimes had an effect favourable to St.Anne's objectives.

In *The Problem of Pain,* Lewis says,

> A merciful man aims at his neighbor's good and so does "God's will", consciously co-operating with "the simple good". A cruel man oppresses his neighbour, and so does simple evil. But in doing such evil, he is used by God, without his own knowledge or consent, to produce the complex good—so that the first man serves God as a son, and the second as a tool. (*Pain*, p. 99)

This is true in this story. Jane is arrested by Miss Hardcastle and tormented physically, burned by a cigarette. But this torment drives her to join St. Anne's, though before the arrest she would rather stay alone without joining either the N.I.C.E. or St. Anne's. Therefore, by arresting Jane,

the N.I.C.E. only pushes her into Ransom's hand and thus works for the good without knowing it.

Likewise, Mark sees significance in Christianity for the first time when he is involved in the N.I.C.E. His interest has never been in religion, or justice, or pleasure, or beauty. What he has wanted all his life is to get into some inner ring, "to be an insider" (p. 245) of some exclusive elite group in the society that he belongs to. When he has been caught in custody as a suspect of Hingest's murder, he realizes that he has never really liked the people in such inner rings and how foolish he has been to have kept himself away from pleasant good people in order to be with those he did not like.

> The hours that he had spent learning the very slang of each new circle that attracted him, the perpetual assumption of interest in things he found dull and of knowledge he did not possess, the almost heroic sacrifice of nearly every person and thing he actually enjoyed, the miserable attempt to pretend that one could enjoy Grip, or the Progressive Element, or the N.I.C.E.—all this came over him with a kind of heart-break. When had he ever done what he wanted? Mixed with the people whom he liked? Or even eaten and drunk what took his fancy? (pp. 246–247)

The confinement by the N.I.C.E. thus leads him to self-recognition. Likewise, when the N.I.C.E. forces him to undergo the objectivity training, the result turns out to be something quite unexpected to the N.I.C.E. In the training, the N.I.C.E. exposes Mark to abnormal, disgusting things one after another so as to desensitize his ability to make moral and aesthetic judgments, expecting that he will in the end get used to such things and cease to react to them psychologically. However, the abnormal, disgusting things only make him notice, in comparison, the beauty and rightness of ordinary things which he has taken for granted and in which he has not seen any particular goodness at all.

Furthermore, when Frost tells Mark to step on a figure of Christ on the cross, Mark feels himself too helpless not to obey the command, and in that helplessness, suddenly realizes that there is a real meaning in the figure.

> Obviously, if he disobeyed, his last chance of getting out of Belbury alive might be gone.... He was himself, he felt, as helpless as the wooden Christ. As he thought this, he found himself looking at the crucifix in a new way—neither as a piece of wood nor a monument of superstition but as a bit of history. Christianity was nonsense, but one did not doubt that the man had lived and had been executed thus by the Belbury of those days.... It was a picture of what happened when the Straight met the Crooked, a picture of what the Crooked did to the Straight—what it would do to him if he remained straight. It was, in a more emphatic sense than he had yet understood, a cross. (p. 336)

This is Mark's first religious experience. And thus, the N.I.C.E. unintentionally leads him toward Christ, and again works for the good while trying to do evil.

Furthermore, at the end of the battle between St. Anne's and the N.I.C.E., the guardian gods of Venus and Mars come down on the earth and give power to Ransom's party, but it is the N.I.C.E. that has initially opened the way for them. As is said in *Out of the Silent Planet*, the earth was cut off from heaven and there have been no comings and goings between them. However, since the N.I.C.E. called in the supernatural evil power in order to dominate the earth, the frontier between

the earth and the outer supernatural region of heaven has been broken. Ransom says,

> The Hideous Strength holds all this Earth in its fist to squeeze as it wishes. . . . If of their own evil will they had not broken the frontier and let in the celestial Powers, this would be their moment of victory. Their own strength has betrayed them. They have gone to the gods who would not have come to them, and pulled down Deep Heaven on their heads. (pp. 293–294)

Just as Satan in Milton's *Paradise Lost* is definitely powerless before God though he is as strong as the God's general archangel Michael, so the evil power embodied in the N.I.C.E. is weak before the power of Deep Heaven, or Maleldil, though it is as strong as Ransom's force. Now that it has called gods before the ordained time of the Last Judgment, it has to be judged and executed without waiting Jesus's Second Coming.

Wither, one of the few that know the evil power behind the Head of Alcasan, also knows its intrinsic powerlessness thus:

> powers more than human had come down to destroy Belbury . . . It meant that his own dark Masters had been completely out in their calculations. They had talked of a barrier which made it impossible that powers from Deep Heaven should reach the surface of the Earth. . . . All their polity was based on the belief that Tellus was blockaded, beyond the reach of such assistance and left . . . to their mercy and his. Therefore he knew that everything was lost. (pp. 352–353)

The confusion of language at the banquet of the N.I.C.E., especially the confusion of Jule's speech before the N.I.C.E. members, reminds us not only of the Tower of Babel but also of Milton's Satan who is changed into a serpent in the middle of his speech, being deprived of language.

Marlin's sentence on the N.I.C.E. people, "*Qui Verbum Dei contempserunt, eis auferetur etiam verbum hominis*," (They that have despised the word of God, from them shall the word of man also be taken away,) (p. 351) is Heaven's sentence on the falsehood and lying in the N.I.C.E. In the epitaph to *That Hideous Strength* Lewis quotes David Lyndsay's description of the Tower of Babel:

> THE SHADOW OF THAT HYDDEOUS STRENGTH
> SAX MYLE AND MORE IT IS OF LENGTH
> (from *Ane Dialog*) (*Hideous*, p. 3)

The N.I.C.E.'s attempt at making a new life is as serious a hubris as building the Tower of Babel, and is punished accordingly. Besides, in Lewis's fiction, the creature's command of language is a token of the right relationship between the creature and the Creator. Since God in the New Testament is expressed as the Word, the word cannot stay with those who are against God.

< Salvation theme—Attainment of Reality >

In *That Hideous Strength*, side by side with the conflict between the supernatural good and evil, the theme of salvation of individuals is of central importance. It concerns morality between man and God, or of the right relationship of man to the ultimate Reality.

Wither and Frost have chosen to abandon and destroy their own spiritual existence and succeeds in it. They will never be saved, for they have rejected their own status as a living spiritual creature,

alienated themselves from God. They wish to be Creators themselves like God, trying to make a new life, but actually, they have become even less than human beings. There is not a human left in them, and they will never get into God's Real world, either.

Mark, the only person in this book who moves into the N.I.C.E. and then leaves it for St. Anne's, descends the ladder of good and evil and then re-ascends it. Mark alone experiences the evil of the N.I.C.E. and the good of St. Anne's both from within. His degradation is quite gradual and the process is often unnoticed even by himself. When he joins the N.I.C.E., he does not suspect the evil nature of the institute. He is surprised when he is told to write false press articles on a riot which has not occurred yet. He asks the N.I.C.E. people, "But how are we to write it tonight if the thing doesn't even happen till tomorrow at the earliest?" (p. 130) They laugh at him and say there is no need to wait for a thing to happen when he is writing a story about it in order to control the public opinion. When laughed at, Mark does not get offended but joins the laughter himself, throwing away the hesitation to do the wrong deed, calling the hesitation as "a faint prejudice." (p. 130) As the devil in *The Screwtape Letters* remarks, "the safest road to Hell is the gradual one . . . without sudden turnings . . . without signposts," (*Screwtape*, p. 65) so the N.I.C.E. draws in Mark without letting him notice his degradation; though in fact, Mark knows the fabrication of the articles to be wrong:

> This was the first thing Mark had been asked to do which he himself, before he did it, clearly knew to be criminal. But the moment of his consent almost escaped his notice; certainly, there was no struggle, no sense of turning a corner. . . . it all slipped past in a chatter of laughter, of that intimate laughter between fellow professionals, which of all earthly powers is strongest to make men do very bad things before they are yet, individually, very bad men. (p. 130)

It is his fear of being excluded from the N.I.C.E.'s inner ring that makes him take the wrong step. And the atmosphere of the seemingly warm laughter helps to take it. As we have seen, Lewis says he is showing in this book that "to be a friend of The World' is to be an enemy of God." Then it is Mark's case that he is referring to. The wish to be inside some exclusive worldly society would cloud one's moral judgment and makes one do whatever will please that society regardless of whether it is right or wrong.

He comes lowest when he is ordered to bring Jane to the N.I.C.E. He intuitively knows that Jane would not fit in the N.I.C.E. and hesitates to obey the order. However, when the order changes into a threat, he makes up his mind as: "He must get her, to save his life. . . . They would kill him if he annoyed them: perhaps behead him. . . ." (p. 185) Here he is no more than a self-centred coward who would sacrifice his wife to save his own life. We are reminded of a passage in Lewis's *A Preface to 'Paradise Lost,'* where he points out that Eve's decision to make Adam share her fate of death is actually a decision of "Murder". (*Preface*, p. 125) If her decision is a murder, then Mark's decision to take Jane with him to the N.I.C.E. is also to be seen as an incipient case of murder.

Yet, while getting so mean towards Jane, Mark is conversely saved by her existence; and that, the very moment of his meanest decision against her almost coincides with the beginning of his salvation. When he thinks of bringing Jane to the N.I.C.E., he realizes the fundamental difference

and incompatibility between Jane and the N.I.C.E. Then, he comes to see the baseness of the N.I.C.E. for the first time.

> Her presence would have made all the laughter of the Inner Ring sound metallic, unreal; and what he now regarded as common prudence would seem to her, and through her to himself, mere flattery, back-biting and toad-eating. Jane in the middle of Belbury would turn the whole of Belbury into a vast vulgarity, flashy and yet furtive. (p. 171)

The presence of the good in the middle of evil necessarily shows off the hideousness of that evil. Later in the N.I.C.E.'s custody, Mark realizes that Jane embodies the whole good world where he has never entered:

> She seemed to him, as he now thought of her, to have in herself deep wells and knee-deep meadows of happiness, rivers of freshness, enchanted gardens of leisure, which he could not enter but could have spoiled. She was one of those other people . . . who could enjoy things for their own sake. She was not like him. It was well that she should be rid of him. (pp. 247–248)

As has been seen in the case of Wither, the loss of "the taste for the other" (*Pain*, p. 111) is a sign of damned souls. "The taste for the other," the capacity of enjoying things for themselves, i.e. not for their pragmatic or economic value, is a mark of good ones. When Mark recognizes this capacity in Jane, and comes to see other people as Jane would see them, he begins to change. He comes to care for the good things, and begins to hate evil, and so comes to hate the N.I.C.E. His first religious experience of seeing a significance in the cross occurs because he has thus already turned himself toward the good.

In the end Mark runs to St. Anne's, having been slapped on his back by Marlin. The pain he has got from the slap has been such that "Mark's bones ached at the memory as long as he lived." (p. 352) This pain he brings in himself all his life is that of expiation of his sin committed in the N.I.C.E.

Jane is by nature on the good's side, as is shown by the fact that, at the first encounter with Ransom, she surrenders her self to him even before she knows it. The beauty and comfort that she finds in his voice is the beauty intrinsic in a heavenly existence. Unless Jane does not have an inner eye to recognize such heavenly beauty, she would not find his voice even attractive.

Before she meets Ransom, she told herself to be careful not to be let in for anything. Though she is inclined to help Ransom's group, she is still unwilling to surrender herself to them. She wants to be in a detached position, as she has always wanted to be on her own. Such unwillingness to self-surrender is in fact one of her conspicuous characteristics.

> One had to live one's own life. To avoid entanglements and interferences had long been one of her first principles. Even when she had discovered that she was going to marry Mark if he asked her, the thought, "But I must still keep up my own life," had arisen at once and had never for more than a few minutes at a stretch been absent from her mind. (p. 72)

She thinks it has nothing to do with Mark whether she is to remain at St. Anne's or to go home. When Ransom says it is difficult to accept her as one of his group because Jane is the wife of a N.I.C.E. member, she feels bitter with Mark: "Why should he and his affairs with the Feverstone

man intrude themselves at such a moment as this?" (p. 145) As she hates to get tied down, she has avoided even having children. This wish to be self-centredly on her own is a sin to be repented, for the wish to be on one's own, the wish "to become, as it were, based on oneself, and so remain"[5] is, as St. Augustine teaches us, the core of man's original sin and an expression of pride.

However, when she sees Ransom, everything goes differently from her original intention of keeping her own life without getting involved.

> Jane looked; and instantly her world was unmade. On a sofa before her, with one foot bandaged as if he had a wound, lay what appeared to be a boy, twenty years old... "Thank you, Grace," the man was saying, "Is this Mrs. Studdock?"
> And the voice also seemed to be like sunlight and gold.... She was shaken: she was even shaking. She hoped intensely that she was not going to cry, or be unable to speak, or do anything silly. For her world was unmade: anything might happen now. (p. 143)

Ransom points out to her that she is wrong about her idea about marriage and obedience. She has insisted on the equality of the two sexes in marriage, and says, "I thought love meant equality, and free companionship." (p. 148) Yet what she has actually meant by "equality" is nothing but lack of mutual responsibility. Ransom tells her that free companionship belongs not to marriage but to friendship.

> [O]bedience—humility—is an erotic necessity. You are putting equality just where it ought not to be.... But you see that obedience and rule are more like a dance than a drill—specially between man and woman where the roles are always changing. (pp. 148–149)

This image of obedience as a dance is Lewis's image of Heaven. He stresses in *The Problem of Pain* and in several other places that the principle of Heaven is mutual "self-giving," (*Pain*, p. 140) which has a rhythm like a dance. Even God Himself is in the dance. He has given His Deity away and become a Man on earth. Jesus Christ the Man has surrendered Himself back to God the Father, and been raised to heaven again. A pattern of "descent and re-ascension" produced by such acts of self-surrender makes up the universal movement in Heaven's dance. In *Perelanda*, Lewis describes the image of Heaven as a self-giving dance:

> In the plan of the Great Dance plans without number interlock, and each movement becomes in its season the breaking into flower of the whole design to which all else had been directed. Thus each is equally at the centre and none are there by being equals, but some by giving place and some by receiving it, the small things by their smallness and the great by their greatness, and all the patterns linked and looped together by the unions of a kneeling with a sceptred love. (*Perelandra*, p. 217)

Incidentally, in this image of Heaven as a ever-changing dance, not as a fixed equality, we see Lewis's conviction that democracy and legal equality is only the second best to the order through mutual voluntary obedience. Ransom tells Jane that "Equality guards life; it doesn't make it. It is medicine, not food." (p. 148) Lewis supports democracy as a system of government, but this is only because he thinks "that no man or group of man is good enough to be trusted with uncontrolled power over others. And the higher the pretensions of such power, the more dangerous... both to

the rulers and to the subjects." ("A Reply to Professor Haldane," *On Stories*, p. 75) Yet here, Lewis suggests that though voluntary obedience would be impossible in the world of politics, in marriage, where the husband and the wife are connected by love, harmony by mutual obedience can, and should, be realized.

To go back to Jane, her arrest by the N.I.C.E.'s emergency police on her way and the following physical torment she gets from Miss Hardcastle symbolically atone for her pride of wishing to be too independent. It is especially true when we remember that she becomes a real member of St. Anne's when she has come through that torment.

At the St. Anne's she learns, through her faith in Ransom, to love Mark and to obey Maleldil. When asked if she obeys Maleldil, she confesses to Ransom, "I know nothing of Maleldil. But I place myself in obedience to you."(p.229) Ransom answers to this,"It is enough for the present. . . . when you mean well, He always takes you to have meant better than you knew. It will not be enough for always. He is very jealous. He will have you for no one but Himself in the end." (pp. 229–230)

Ransom's words turn out to be true later when she suddenly feels Maleldil's presence. When she gets His self-revelation, she has been thinking about love for Mark and love for Maleldil. She was told by Ransom that in rejecting Mark, she was rejecting "the masculine itself: the loud, irruptive, possessive thing." (pp. 315–316) She was told that it is pride that made her reject such possessive masculinity. He said,

> The male you could have escaped, for it exists only on the biological level. But the masculine none of us can escape. What is above and beyond all things is so masculine that we are all feminine in relation to it. You had better agree with your adversary quickly. (p. 316)

When she heard this she did not understand why Mark and "What is above and beyond all things," that is, Maleldil, can be thus connected. However, when she feels Maleldil's presence just beside her, all at once she understands His masculine force and apprehends that she is femininely dependent on Him. In this revelation, she realizes that Maleldil is really demanding her whole being and that, the demand is "the origin of all right demands." (p. 318) This is the same experience as that which Lewis has had in his conversion and describes in *Surprised by Joy*. (cf. *Joy*, p. 181) Before Lewis came to believe in the God of Christianity, there was a time when he believed in the ideal "Absolute", holding that "we have, so to speak, a root in the Absolute," (*Joy*, p. 177) though he did not think the Absolute existence to be personal. He did not expect any possibility that man should ever encounter "the Absolute". However, when he was praying to it, calling it "the Spirit", he had God's revelation.

> Perhaps, even now, my Absolute Spirit still differed in some way from the God of religion. The real issue was not, or not yet, there. The real terror was that if you seriously believed in even such a "God" or "Spirit" as I admitted, a wholly new situation developed. . . . now a philosophical theorem, cerebrally entertained, began to stir and heave and throw off its gravecloths, and stood upright and became a living presence. I was to be allowed to play at philosophy no longer. . . . He only said, "I am the Lord"; "I am that I am"; "I am". (*Joy*, p. 181)

Lewis says that before his conversion he had always wanted "not to be 'interfered with.'" He says, "I had wanted (mad wish) 'to call my soul my own.'" (*Joy*, p. 182) He was the type who was far more anxious to avoid suffering than to achieve delight. However, God did not allow him to remain his own master. Likewise, Jane is swept by Maleldil's presence and undergoes a spiritual transformation.

> In this height and depth and breadth the little idea of herself which she had hitherto called me dropped down and vanished, unfluttering, into bottomless distance, like a bird in a space without air. The name me was the name of a being whose existence she had never suspected, a being that did not yet fully exist but which was demanded. It was a person . . . yet also a thing, a made thing, a thing being made at this very moment, without its choice, in a shape it had never dreamed of. (pp. 318–319)

This is the religious faith Jane has attained in the end.

Huw Mordecai in "The Problem of Co-Inherence" points out that in Charles William's idea of "Co-inherence" or of "the Practice of substituted love," it is to be understood that "Sin dispossesses us of our capacity for free wil, reason and love. It is only by the indwelling of the Spirit of God that we begin to possess these qualities, and so become our true selves. Because this act of indwelling is also an act of creation, it would be wrong to conceive of the Spirit as a gift given by God which 'I' receive. It is only through this receiving that the 'I' exists, that 'I' become."[6] Mordecai then quotes from R. C. Moberly's *Atonement and Personality* the following passage, which Modecai finds "legitimate Willliams' argument" that all Christians need to bear another's burdens while having his own burdens borne:

> never am I, as I, so capable, so personal, so real; never am I, in a word, as really what the real 'I' always tried to mean; as when by the true indwelling of the Spirit of God, I enter in to the realization of myself; as when I at last correspond to, and fulfil, and expand in fulfilling, all the unexplored possibilities of my personal being, by a perfect mirroring of the Spirit of Christ; as when in Him and by Him I am, at last, a true, willing, personal response to the very Being of God.[7]

Here, Jane has achieved her own atonement by giving up her own burden of sin of pride to Ransom so as to exist as a real personality for the first time. Jane's sin, "pride", is regarded as the most serious sin in the Christian tradition, but in spite of that, she is saved. This is because she has a will to follow Ransom, and, following Ransom, she is in fact following Maleldil through him; and no one who has a will to obey God will be damned in Lewis's work.

Ransom, who has led Jane to Maleldil, is raised to Heaven by eldila. Thus, in this book, Jane raised Mark up to the world of Ransom, Ransom leads Jane up to Maleldil, and eldila from Heaven raises Ransom to Deep Heaven. In each case, it is someone just one level nearer to Maleldil who leads Mark, Jane or Ransom in the direction to Heaven.

In *The Discarded Image*, Lewis points out that in the medieval and Renaissance times people believed "the Principle of the Triad": "it is impossible that two things only should be joined together without a third. There must be some bond in between both to bring them together. . . . god does not meet man. They can encounter one another only indirectly; there must be some wire,

some medium, some introducer, some bridge—a third thing of some sort—in between them." (*Discarded*, p. 44)

In *That Hideous Strength*, then, we see the triad of Mark-Jane-Ransom, Jane-Ransom-Maleldil, Ransom-eldila-Maleldil. There needs some agent when someone is to go up onto the next ladder toward Maleldil.

Another important point in the salvation of Mark and Jane is that in each case, it is the existence of Jane or Ransom itself that moves them. That is, they are not persuaded by the words but feel some heavenly quality in the other and are attracted by it. When there is something good in a person, it reveals by itself, and moves others.

< Problem of Suffering >

In *That Hideous Strength*, those who are gifted some special power suffer much more than the others in trying to work for good. The problem of suffering in this book is then mainly that of the suffering of those selected by God. This is connected with Lewis's belief in vicarious suffering of Jesus for our fallen humanity.

Jane is annoyed by her role as a seer. She says, "I want to lead an ordinary life.... It's unbearable. Why should I be selected for this horrible thing?" (p. 66) and tries to avoid seeing prophetic dreams. Marlin is also afraid when he has to go alone into the N.I.C.E. to destroy it, and tries to avoid this role. But still, both Jane and Marlin have to overcome their fright and carry out their tasks. Above all, Ransom is selected to bear a continuous pain from his wound in the ankle which he got in combat with Un-man. When he has made his own atonement on Perelandra, he still has to suffer pain for the others. The blood that never stops dripping from his ankle now is shed for the redemption of the other humanity. Once, Christ died on the cross, and as it is prophesied in the Old Testament that "Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us," (Hebrews 9.12) he is raised to heaven after the redemption. The blood of Christ is the token of redemption for us all, and so is Ransom's. The name "Ransom" may then have come from God's providence that he was, together with Christ, to redeem mankind.

Lewis in *Miracles* finds vicariousness to be one of Nature's fundamental characteristics that has culminated in Jesus's vicarious death for the whole humanity. The vicarious suffering is, to Lewis, a part of the Natural order. Therefore, though the reader may suspect an allegory of Christ in the suffering of Ransom or Jane, their sufferings are not to be regarded merely as allegories of Christ's agony. Nor should we see Christ's own suffering in their pain. Lewis is not the same as such a theologian as Tillich, who sees Christ in every man's suffering thus: "God, as manifest in the Christ on the Cross, totally participates in the dying of a child, in the condemnation of the criminal, in the disintegration of a mind, in starvation and famine, and even in the human rejection of Himself."[9] Ransom and Jane endure and surrender themselves to the pain and it is they, helped by Maleldil, who suffer. Yet at the same time their sufferings are sufferings for the others as Jesus's suffering was for the whole human race.

notes

1. D. E. Glover, *C.S. Lewis: The Art of Enchantment* (Ohio Univ. Press, 1981), p. 115.
2. Immanuel Kant, *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime*, tr. John T. Goldthwait (Univ. of California Press, c. 1960; rpt. 1981), p. 45.
3. John Lucas, "The Restoration of Man, *Theology* Vol. XCVIII, No. 786 (Nov./Dec., 1995), pp. 445–456. Quot. from p. 446.
4. Lucas, p. 450.
5. St. Augustine, *City of God*, Book XIV. Ch. 13. p. 571.
6. Hum Mordecai, "The Problem of Co-Inherence: Can R. C. Moberly Bear the Burdens of Charles Williams?" *Theology*, Vol. XCVIII, No. 786 (Nov./Dec., 1995), pp. 456–461. Quot. from p. 460.
7. Quoted by Mordecai from R. C. Moberly, *Atonement and Personality* (John Murray, 1901), p. 252.
8. Paul Tillich, *The Eternal Now* (1956, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1963), p. 46.

V Myth

Lewis believes in the truth of myth as an expression of reality. Christianity is for him, "myth which is also a fact," ("Myth Became Fact," *Dock*, p. 66.) and even pagan mythologies have some truth in it.

> My present view . . . would be that just as, on the factual side, a long preparation culminates in God's becoming incarnate as Man, so, on the documentary side, the truth first appears in mythical form and then by a long process of condensing or focusing finally becomes incarnate as History. This involves the belief that Myth in general is not merely misunderstood history . . . nor priestly lying . . . but, at its best, a real though unfocused gleam of divine truth falling on human imagination. (*Miracles*, pp. 137–138n.)

This belief is reflected many ways in this trilogy. As Martha C. Sammons points out, "much of his material is actually rooted in the ancient medieval way of seeing life,"[1] we see much of the medieval mythological Ptolemaic idea of the universe here. In the trilogy, Sammons sees the ideas of Music of the Spheres, the Great Dance, the Great Chain of Being, and angels and guardian angels of the planets. As to the Music of the Spheres, we have already seen in relation to the connotation of "the Silent Planet." I suspect Sammons reads more meaning than Lewis intends about the silence of the earth, yet as to the other points, Sammons is right in pointing out the medieval ideas in the trilogy. The idea of the Great Dance, that compares the ideal harmony of all the creatures to a dance, is manifestly expressed in the hymn of *eldila* in *Perelandra*.[2]

Besides, in *That Hideous Strength*, the ideal marriage is compared to "Dance," where man and woman are always changing their roles and becoming the ruler in turns.(p. 149) The Oyarsas and *eldila* are respectively equivalents of guardian angels and angels in the medieval cosmology, and the idea of the "Great Chain of Being", that is, from A. O. Lovejoy's famous definition, "an immense, or . . . infinite, number of links ranging in hierarchical order from the meagerest kind of existents, which barely escape non-existence, through 'every possible' grade up . . . to the highest possible kind of creature, between which and the Absolute Being the disparity was assumed to be infinite—every one of them differing from that immediately above and that immediately below it,"[3] is seen in the ladder of Maleldil—*eldil*—*fnaus*, (including man and Green Lady)—animals (e.g. Dolphins on Perelandra and animals in St. Anne's).

As in the actual life Lewis denies such scientism as considers the scientific world view to be the only right way of seeing the universe, in the trilogy, he presents these mythological concepts as a sort of reality. While travelling from the earth to Mars, Ransom finds the light around the spaceship so overwhelmingly bright and realizes it was wrong of him to have thought the universe to be empty space.

> [H]e found it night by night more difficult to disbelieve in old astrology: almost he felt, wholly he imagined, 'sweet influence' pouring or even stabbing into his surrendered body. (*Silent Planet*, p. 31)

The "influence" here is the power of planets that was believed in the old cosmology to flow into (*in* + *fluo*) people on the earth and affects their fates and humours. Lewis must have written this passage with the medieval idea of the universe in mind.

Ransom feels on his way back to the earth from Malacandra, "that the distinction between history and mythology might be itself meaningless outside the Earth." (*Silent Planet*. pp. 144–145) Such a way of regarding myth as truth is actually a reflection of Lewis's own conviction. In *Miracles*, Lewis says of a time when the New Creation through Christ will be accomplished:

> The archaic type of thought which could not clearly distinguish spiritual "Heaven" from the sky, is from our point of view a confused type of thought. But it also resembles and anticipates a type of thought which will one day be true. That archaic sort of thinking will become simply the correct sort when Nature and Spirit are fully harmonised—when Spirit rides Nature so perfectly that the two together make rather a *Centaur* than a mounted knight. (p. 164)

The heaven in the trilogy is uncorrupted, and therefore, the estrangement between the spiritual world and Nature has never occurred. It is still a mythical world, and Lewis is suggesting it is the original and proper state of the universe as is intended by God.

notes

1. Sammons, p. 41.
2. In the plan of the Great Dance plans without number interlock, and each movement becomes in its season the breaking into flower of the whole design to which all else had been directed. Thus each is equally at the centre and none are there by being equals, but some by giving place and some by receiving it, the small things by their smallness and the great by their greatness, and all the patterns linked and looped together by the unions of kneeling with a sceptred love. (*Perelandra*, p. 217)
3. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being*, p. 59.

VI Conclusion

In this trilogy, Lewis thus presents the nature of good and evil through the contrast and conflict between them. Especially, he illustrates the perversion and powerlessness of evil. In *Out of the Silent Planet* he calls for our reflection on the fallen humanity. In *Perelandra*, he shows evil to be miserable as well, while stressing God's absolute goodness and justice, denying the notion of *felix culpa*.

In *That Hideous Strength*, there are various themes and questions woven within the framework of romance: the elements from Arthurian legend such as the conflict between Logres and Britain;

criticism of modern lack of attention to moral laws; reflections as to the right relationship between a man and his wife as well as between man and God; the problem of suffering and redemption, and so on. The theme of conflict between Logres and Britain, which we have not especially discussed in this essay, is said to be a favourite of Charles Williams, one of Lewis's close friends. Through the conflict between the N.I.C.E. and Ransom, Lewis again depicts the hideousness, falsity, and weakness of evil before the good.

Lewis's evil in the trilogy, as in his other stories, may appear too idealistic in that it does not show such powerful inexorability as it does in the actual world, but this weakness of evil is a reflection of Lewis's belief that in Reality, on the metaphysical, mythical level in the world of God, evil is ultimately the loser and weaker than the good, being no more than its perversion.